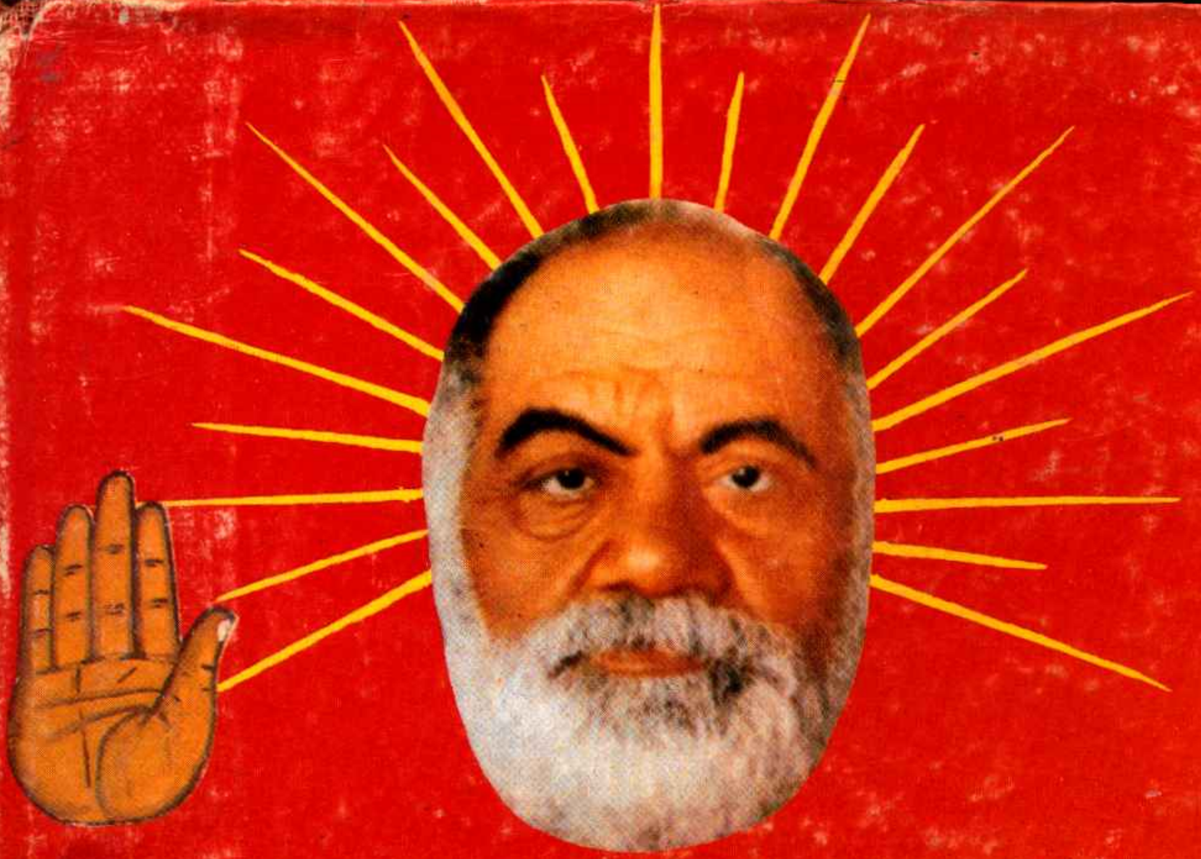

REMINISCENCES

(Of a Devotee)

P.M. ZUTSHI

Reminiscences

(of a Devotee)

written by
P.M.ZUTSHI

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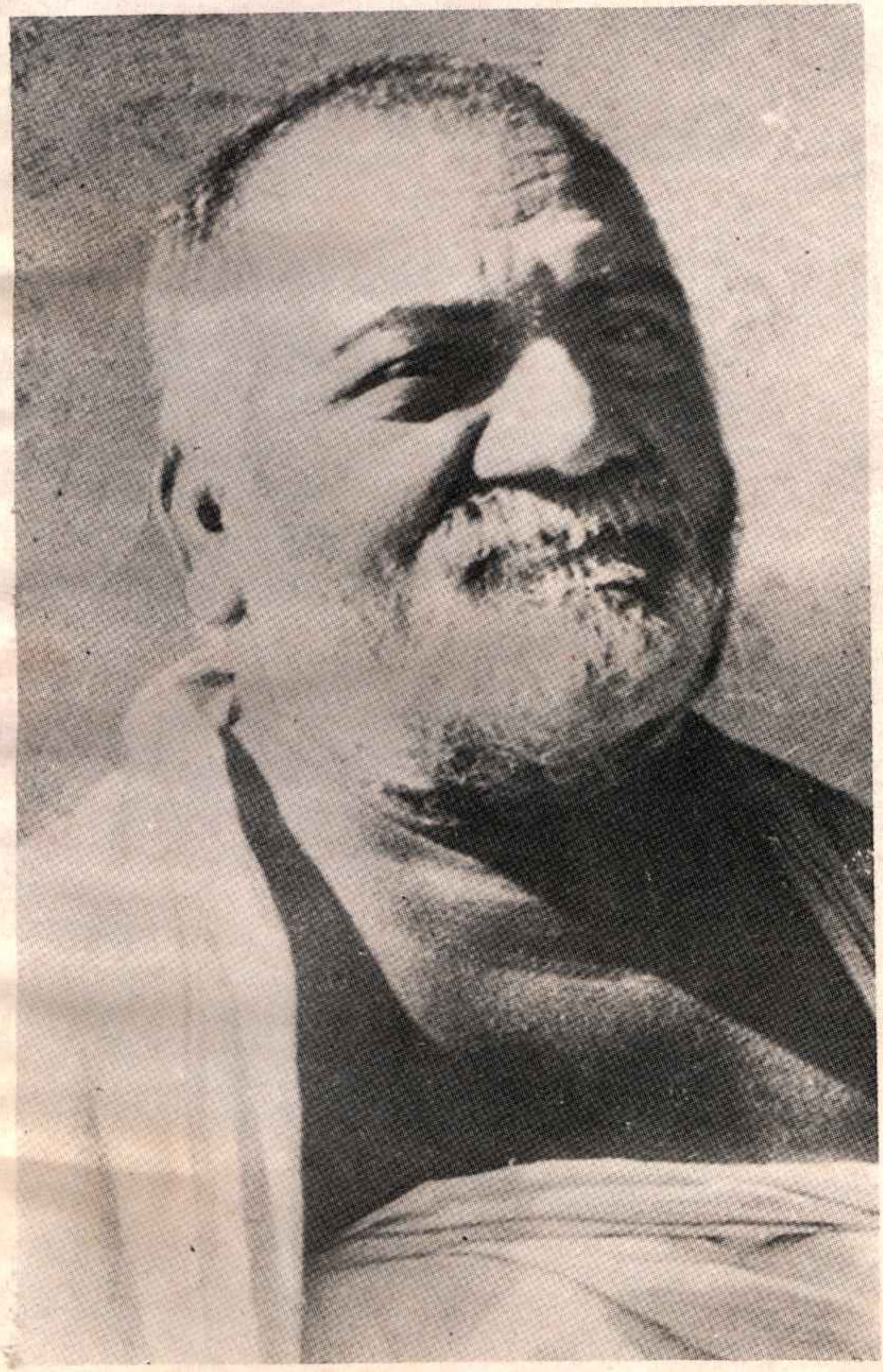

Shri Swami Maharaj of Datiya (M.P)

Kalimai of Dhaulpur (Raj.)

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I am grateful to Brigadier S.K. Sapru, with whom I stayed throughout the writing of this book and who provided me with the entire paraphernalia conducive to writing.

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Most grateful thanks are also due to my dearest friend, younger brother and "Guru Bhai", Sagar, for taking upon himself the responsibility of this stupendous task of printing and publishing this book in his own press.

I sincerely thank my two teenaged Grand-daughters Divya and Deepti, particularly Divya who conceived and designed the cover of this book so splendidly.

Last but not the least I owe special thanks to Shri Srikant Tiwari, Manager "Shiv Shakti Press" for undertaking the big ordeal of getting this book published; and also to Shri Prakash Chand of "Shiv Shakti Press", Jhansi for rendering invaluable help.

PRAKASH MOHAN ZUTSHI

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PRAKASH MOHAN ZUTSHI

A Word to the Reader

It gives me a sense of pride to introduce the reader to my father's memoirs. I have been a witness to quite a few events and episodes mentioned in the book. Inspite of failing eyesight and frail hands, the author has produced an extremely readable book.

My first impression of the author dates back to my childhood when I would sit for hours together in his lap while he prayed. Even to my child's mind it was evident that he shared a special bond with the Goddess Kali. Adversity, sometimes with its very severe blows, could never shake his faith in his 'Mother' and his 'Master' (the revered Swamiji of Datia).

Our Swamiji Maharaj was not only a true saint but also a great scholar. He influenced the lives of millions of people belonging to all castes, creed and religion. The famous 'Dagar bandhu' were as much his disciples as Pandit Rajan and Sajan Mishra. A legend in his life time, Swamiji was a lode-star for the Zutshi family for more than three generations.

These are reminiscences of a man who is living under his Master's shadow. I am sure the readers would find the book interesting.

INDU MASALDAN
Reader in English
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

PREFACE

OM

"Mujh mein kahan wo Taab Likhoon Ek Harf bhi
Koi Likha Raha hai Likhe Ja Raha Hoon Main''

Throughout my whole life I had worked in a Government office where except for writing routine notes and drafts on the office files, I did no other writing. Writing therefore has not been my forte. I retired from Govt. Service in May 1980 and since then I have not done anything except reading a few books on homeopathy, distributing medicines to some friendly patients, savouring some books of literature, and a little meditation. I had always been a leisurely type of person and my late wife always compared me to a Python saying the following-

'Ajgar karen na chakri, Panchi karen na kaam
Das Malukha keh gaye ke sab ke data Ram"

With a betel leaf in the mouth and a cigarette in hand, I loved to lie or play cards. Although in a poem, written on myself, I once wrote thus-

"Who says I have been idling since long
Infact been busy all along
It is a whole time job I am told
To keep busy in getting old"

However, the fact is that I have been idling after retirement. Since idle brain is a devil's workshop I could not desist from thinking. Good ideas, sometimes very good, some bad ideas, sometimes very bad continued to haunt me. My wife had left for her heavenly abode in 1979 and I had nobody left to talk to. The children were busy with their own affairs so I was largely brooding and brooding only for long hours. Just about three months back, i.e. in September, it suddenly occured to me that the moment I died many incidents and many couplets composed by my ancestors would never see the light of the day. Their lives, their living and particularly their deaths were the things which I wanted posterity to know about. A noble death could come more easily only if the person lived a noble life and had noble 'karmas'. Then only a person could leave behind his "foot-prints" on the sand of time. This little booklet is therefore the outcome of that feeling. It is not intended to be for mass consumption but only for enlightening my future generations. If by writing this book, I am able to do so, my mission would be successful and I would achieve my goal. After I had decided to proceed in this task, I found some mysterious power helping me to write. Events of the past sixty-seventy years started coming to my mind suddenly. At times I felt somebody was actually dictating to me while I was writing. Generally memory fades away in old age but in my case it became stronger day by day. I would however like to be excused for the poor English in which the text has been written.

Those readers who might think that I have given them an overdose of poetry I may mention that since my Grandfather was a poet, poetry trickled down the generations and has been in our blood since then. Even the children and grand children, Bhai Sahibis second son Shyam Mohan, my eldest daughter indu, my granddaughter Deepti - are proof of this blood. The only change that has crept in is in language. Previously it was Urdu now it is English or Hindi. Thus this overdose seems to be justified.

Dreams have been an integral part of our lives. Many of these meaningful dreams came out true on interpretation and so I have included a few of them in the text.

RELIVING MY GRAND FATHER

My Grand Father Pt.Kanhaiya Lal Zutshi "Lall" had died long before I was born and so whatever I know about him is from what my mother told me from time to time. I was my mother's last child and was born when she had become quite old. She was therefore more of a granny than a mother to me. Every night she would narrate stories before I slept to make me sleep and this is just a compilation of whatever I heard from her over the years and to the extent I could retain in my memory.

Since my grand father was a poet, he made "Lall" as his Nom-de-plume (pseudonym, or what is called in urdu as "Takhallus").

CHILDHOOD

My grandfather's father, Pt.Bhola Nath had no off-spring of his own and so he adopted a male child born to his sister. It was a common practice those days, particularly among those, who were well off and had enough to support their descendents, to leave behind someone to continue their dynasty. My Baba was thus an adopted child.

From the very childhood he had started showing signs of a different mental make-up. He did not like the luxurious living of his father who was then a "city-kotwal" and had an army of servants, cooks and what not. The authority he exercised could better be imagined than described but it did not impress my grandfather in the least. As he grew a little order, he started moving in the company of saints who were galore at that time, the most prominent among them being "Chup Shah", "Mubarak" Shah and "Babboo mian". The first one did not speak at all a "Mauni Baba" while the last one was considered a "Mazzoob". My mother told me that "Mazzoob" was a term used for a person who was unmindful of what he was wearing or eating but was always lost in thoughts of the Almighty to the extent of nakedness (in the worldly eye) - a "Deewana". Much later i.e. during my time, a renowned poet of Agra, "Seemab Akbarabadi" aptly described this "madness" as only an indication of extreme kindness or blessing of God. He wrote,

"Deewangi-e-ishq bari cheiz hai Seemab.
Yeh uska karam hai jise Deewana Bana dey"

By remaining engrossed in thoughts did not mean that he did not talk sense.

By this time, my great grand father became greatly exercised because of his son's company of saints and his detesting the worldly fold. Whenever this subject was broached before my grand father, he immediately refused the marriage proposal and when more pressure was exercised, he ran away from the house. Several servants and constables were deputed to search him and ultimately he was found in mathura from where he was forcibly brought back to Agra. A strict vigil was then ordered and all his movements were noted. Being in a fix, he went to "Babboo Mian" one day to seek advice for the marriage proposal. Babboo Mian told him "Kanhaiya Lal, goat's meat and our own wife are Halaal". "Halaal' according to the urdu dictionary means, "correct" and permissible "justified" from all angles. Babboo mian's word was a law to my grand father and therefore, though most relactant, he agreed for his marriage. He was married to a woman named "Rukmani Rani" who bore one son and one daughter.

This daughter was married to one Pt.Kunwar Prashad Nala who was a settlement officer under the British. My father never saw him eye to eye as he drank wine which my father hated. We therefore did not know much about him. The son was my father.

My mother told me that shortly thereafter he started practising celebacy which he continued till his end. Now old order had changed, yielding place to new and now, his ancestors, saints and other elders having gone, he was a free man and could pursue his own aims without any constraints. He, therefore, started his meditations and "Pranayam" in right earnest. I vividly remember my mother telling me that he meditated sometimes for as long as eighteen hours at a stretch and had become a complete saint himself. The heights in spiritualism which he achieved, we shall discuss later on.

YOUNG AGE

In his young age, he got a job in some college at Ajmer, perhaps, a govt. college but my memory does not serve me to that extent. He had a very healthy countenance, glowing eyes with a not too flowing beard. He used to wear a turban when out of the house, writing urdu poetry was his only passion and he wrote a complete "Dewan". Once I took that manuscript to show to Shri Swamiji Maharaj (my guru), when he was staying at Dhaulpur. He read a few couplets from different ghazals and then returned it to me. I was still a child then and had hoped he would read the entire stuff but when I asked him as to why he did not peruse the whole of it, he smilingly stated that from a full pot of rice only one grain is taken out to see whether it has been fully cooked or not. It was clear, he had read a few couplets only as samples. Here I reproduce some of his couplets which I remember to this day.

1. On friendship, he wrote -
"Justju hamne zamane mein bahut ki aye "Lal"
Bawafa dost magar soorat-e-unqa dekha"

2. He used to see "Divine Light" face to face because of his extreme devotion and meditation and this he translated in the following couplet - Even if a lakh of rivals may not believe in my statement, I will still say it repeatedly (takrar) that 1 have seen God.

"Lakh Agar na hon deed ke kayal aye "Lal"
Hum ba-takrar kahenge usey dekha, dekha"

In the year 1976, when my office was at Kashmiri Gate, an old friend of our's, Pt.N.N.Tikku, son of L.Pt. Rai Bahadur Pt. Nand Lal Tikku, used to visit me quite frequently. He was then leading a retired life and had ample time for gossips. Although, no poet himself, he was a lover of urdu poetry and had learnt by heart, many urdu couplets of noted poets. We used to discuss, therefore, urdu poetry also. During these talks one day he told me that years back a journal used to come out from Kashmir named Bahar-e-Kashmir. Perhaps some Kashmiri Pandits of Kashmir published it and it contained news and views about Kashiniris. He further told me that my grand father's name also finds place in one of its issues. Tikkus, being a rich family, used to contribute to this journal regularly and had all the copies preserved. I became curious and wanted to see this copy myself. So, on his next visit, he brought it. I was thrilled to read it. It contained bio-data of my grand father in brief and a couplet as a sample of his poetry.

That couplet was as follows :-

"Ishq ki ben se lagane ka Nateeja, dil e-Shaida, dekha?
Hum na kehtethe kaha man, na mane, dekha!"

In this bio data, it was also mentioned that my grand father's

Surname was "Khar'' and became Zutshi only after adoption. This information given by my father was published after a representative of the paper had interviewed my father and so it should be treated as authentic.

USTAD DAAG

Who would feign ignorance that India has produced many great urdu poets some of whom have become legends in their own right? One of these legendary figures was "Ustad Daag". He is reported to have written nine Dewans. (Dewan is a complete book of poems containing couplets ending with "A" to "Z"). Those who write even one such 'Dewan' are called 'Sahib-e-Dewan'. Writing nine such 'Dewans' is truly a rare feat of the poetic genious of Daag's mastery over the language and his vast knowledge of the subjects dominating the society of his times.

This great genious was also staying at Ajmer at that time and so my grand father met him. Both grew friends and my grand father adopted him as his "guru" (ustad).

My mother told me that both used to go for an evening walk every day and the destination was always the Shrine (Dargah) of Hazrat Khawaja Moin-uddin Chishti, the most renowned Sufi Saint of his times and popularly known as "Gareeb Nawaz (Protector of the poor) "Daag" always kept a note book and a pen in his pocket and while walking to the Shrine, if he could muster a few couplets, he would stop on the road itself, take out his note book and pen and would scribble them, then and there and then restart his journey onwards. Ustad Daag was passing some of his worst days of his life, abject poverty according to the impression my mother gave me. What a contrast? A man, in whose veins ran blue blood and who was a grand son of another renowned poet, Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Moghul Emperor of India! He was brought up like a prince as prince he was, but misfortune over powered him when his father died while he was still a child and his mother remarried the then Nawab of Rampur (now in U.P.) and took him there.

It is obvious that he must always be brooding over his poverty and so one evening while on his way to the Dargah he suddenly stopped mid way as was his wont, took out his note-book from his pocket and started scribbling. What a motnent! Imagine, my grand father standing by his side, at this moment! Having written, he moved on and reached the Dargah. There, he again took out his note book and started reciting the couplets (before the tomb) he had just composed a couple of minutes back. My mother had remembered the entire Ghazal by heart and also used to read it to me several times so that I might also cram it. It is my most regrettable misfortune that I could not cram the entire Ghazal but a few couplets only which are still fresh in my mind. I reproduce them :-

“Ya khwaja Moin-uddin chishti
Sultan-ul-Hind, Garib Nawaj.

(This was the first line, the second one I have forgotten. This was the ‘Matla’ the opening couplet.)

The other couplets were as follows :-

1. **Lal hai mujhe umeed-e-karam**
is khak ki aur is dar ki Qasam.
Aaya hoon Pa-e-haajat talabi
Sultan-ul-Hind Garib Nawaz.

2. **Kya meri zaban, kya mera bayan**
mein hech madan tum par qurban
Kehte hein Malik bhi tum ko yahi
Sultan-ul-Hind Garib Nawaz.

3. **Yeh Daag kahan tak ranj sahe**
Tum se na kahe to kis se kahe
Tum Aab-e-Ali, Aulad-e-Nabi
Sultan-ul-Hind Garib Nawaz.

My mother further told me that after reciting this Ghazal, Daag remained benumbed for a while and tears were seen flowing from his eyes. This was told to her by my grand father in whose presence all this had happened.

My mother then told me how soon khwaja sahib heard his prayers within three days of this recitation. "Daag Sahib" received a communication from the then Nawab of Hyderabad appointing him as poet laureate. Imagine, how fortune smiled on him. This appointment was to take effect from a retrospective date. He got arrears amounting to several thousand rupees besides a huge monthly salary, a horse-carriage, with flunkeys.

I also learned from my Bauaji that it was in her personal knowledge that khwaja Sahib had showered similar blessings on several others too whom she knew.

Indeed! "Faith moves mountains." As a child I had often heard tales as to how Qawwals gathered at the shrine on 'urs' days and sang their choicest Qawwalis. One or two lines from them are still echoing in my ears. One of them was :-

Tu kishti par kar Meri
Moin-uddin Ajmeri".
"Tera wajood zaroori hai maiqade ke liya jo tu nahein
to jehannum hai Mai-qada khwaja".

"Mai-qada" here does not mean the worldly tavern where wine and other alcoholic drinks are served but a place where the wine of spiritualism is served.

Here, I would like to describe the boon granted to me too by khwaja Sahib as far back as 1952 though quite inadvertently. It so happened that in 1952 I went to Udaipur to attend the marriages of two daughters of my elder sister Rajjan didda who were married on the same day. Accordingly I started from Delhi by a night train which reached Ajmer early next day. Here I had to take another train since in those days there was no direct train from Delhi to Udaipur.

There was enough time to wash, shave, change and for a break-fast. While I was doing all this in the waiting-room, my childhood memories suddenly revived and my thoughts went straight to khwaja Sahib, as to how my grandfather and father used to go there to get his blessings. My mother had fully briefed me long back with regard to the women who were blessed with sons. These memories were still rather fresh in my mind. My wife was at that time in the family way. By then I had already had two daughters and therefore quite naturally it occurred to me that if khwaja Sahib could bless me with a son, how nice it would be. I also thought I would offer a "chadar" at the shrine in case I got a son. All this was in my thoughts only which also I forgot as soon as I boarded another train for Udaipur.

However, on my return from Udaipur I found that the time was ripe for wife's delivery. We removed her to the hospital and she delivered a male child. We all were naturally jubilant so had totally forgotten about khwaja Sahib or for that matter that this boy was the result of his boon. However one thing that reminded me of him was that this child must have been a muslim in his previous birth. How? We noticed that he had no fore skin on his organ (like muslims.) Perhaps he had his 'Sunnat' in the womb itself. When he sat his posture was exactly like that of a muslim readying for offering 'Namaz'.

Another notable feature was that he loved to eat meat and meat alone and discarded all vegetables inspite of his mother's repeated scoldings. We all know time flies and soon no less then forty four years passed but nothing in particular happened. But, suddenly, something worth mentioning actually happened. One may even call it a miracle of sorts. This son of nine, Yogi, about whom we are talking was working for a company and was posted at Faridabad (Haryana). However, a few months back, he was transferred to Chandigarh (Punjab). Now listen carefully! Here he meets an absolute stranger - a normal, ordinary Punjabi house-wife. She looks at him and starts speaking. She tells him that he was an Imam in his previous birth bestowed on his father (me) by khwaja Sahib of Ajmer. But, that his father did not keep up his promise and has failed to offer a 'chadar' to him and that is the root cause of all, his ills. She advised him that a 'chadar' should be offerred without delay and that he should also hold a "jagrata" (people in Punjab call if a "jag rata" white we in U.P. call it "Rut-jaga"). A whole night Puja is performed through various 'Mandalis' without pause, and at the end, prasad is distributed. As soon as I heard this story, I despatched my younger son, Gyani to go to Ajmer and offer a 'chadar' at the shrine on my behalf. He did it quite faithfully and also apologised for the delay but the "jag rata" could not be arranged due to certain reasons. Does this incident not confirm that this son was actually "bestowed"?

Some years back, I also saw khwaja sahib in my dream. I saw a short-statured man with a white cap, wearing a number of necklaces made of different stones in different colours and leading a procession consisting of several hundred followers. I was standing on the road side and when I asked someone standing near me as to who this gentleman was, he replied "Khwaja Sahib". At that very moment, khwaja sahib turned his eyes towards me and smilingly said "Aap bhi chaliye" but, unfortunately, before I could react the dream ended and I woke up. I started brooding over this exceptional dream for sometime. I thought I already had an all powerful Guru under whose shadow I was happily surviving and on whom my faith could never dither. Then why this confusion,' what is the meaning of all this? I could not find any answer and the matter ended.

A few years back, perhaps in the year 1989, a good friend of mine took me on to a tour of some religious places, prominent among which were the shrines of Sat Sai Baba and that of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. The latter is worshipped in practically every house in Maharashtra. However, when I bowed my head in obeisance before his image the following 'Qata' immediately shot from my lips :-

"Yahan kitne hi peer-o-faqir hein
Aur lakhon inke Mureed bhi
Magar unse mujhko milega kya
Mera Peer to koi aur hai".

(A 'Qata' is of four lines as against a couplet which consists of two lines only).

It is my surmise that this boon I got was due to the life-long devotion of my father and my Baba otherwise I had not done anything to earn this favour.

According to my mother, "Daag" had hundreds of disciples who used to send their compositions to him for corrections but he did not disappoint any one. He improved these ghazals and made sure that they reached back their writers, by post, naturally. Yes, about my grand father's sadness, I reproduce a couplet, he then wrote :-

"Afsos hai kya kijiye, tanha hai "Lal" Ajmer mein,
Ustad hein su-e-decan ek is taraf ekus taraf.

"Daag" for one of his ghazals had composed the following couplet :-

Na nikla koi baat ka apni pura
Magar aik nikla to Mansoor nikla"

My grand father in his ghazal in the same ("Radeef" and Qafia) 'rhyme' wrote the following couplet :-
"Hai daulat-e-ishq lakhon ko hasil
Nahi aik Mansoor, Mansoor nikla"

For those who may not be familiar with Mansoor's story, I may add that he was a man, who always claimed that he was himself a god. "Anal Haq" or ("I am God") was always his refrain. The king and the people criticised and revolted against him for blasphemy and ultimately he was crucified. But every body was left stunned when they saw blood coming out of his body and in clear visible letters of "Anal Haq", "Anal Haq".

When this ghazal was sent to the ustad of Hyderabad, he not only corrected it as usual and returned but also sent a post-card separately (its cost was one paise in those days) in which he wrote to my grandfather that this couplet of his excelled his own. His couplet was literally dwarfed by my grandfather's couplet, I had the proud privilege of reading this card since it had been preserved as our most precious treasure along with others - manuscript of Aaine Ak bari, a pocket size hand-written, round in shape, gist of the holy Quran, a "hauldili" (a precious oval shaped stone), duly framed and of the size of a big cone (but not round). My mother wore it as a pendant all the time in her earlier years. My mother told me that it was given to her by her mother in law. It was supposed to have great medicinal value in the sense that you could ward off a threatened heart attack by licking it. Originally, there were two in the house but subsequently my mother gave one to her eldest daughter. I saw her wearing it for many years. There was also a photograph of the Maharaja of Bundi sitting on a lavish chair with his two young sons standing on either side whom my father used to teach. Since it was presented by the Maharaja himself after autographing it, it was also preserved. Then, there was a silver seal, used for sealing envelops etc. with the sealing wax. On this seal were engraved the words "Hira Lal Raina", in urdu. Its owner must have been some relative of our ancestors but I do not know who exactly he was. There was also a copy of "Dewan-e-Hafiz" a great saint of his times and from which Bhaiji often used to take out premonition from the couplets from the page which opened at random after some meditation. By this method my father used to predict whether success or otherwise would be achieved or not in particular case for which this draw was made. It was called 'Faal'.

It is in my knowledge that some such predictions really came out true. There were certain other books too but which I am not able to recount. Last, but not the least, was the manuscript of my grandfather's 'Dewan' and the post-card written by 'Daag' Sahib which I have already described above. All these articles (I must call them antiques, as antiques they were) were lying in a steel box and were apparently in absolutely safe condition. No one knew, however, that some big misfortune was about to fall on us which would simply and in unmistaken terms ruin us. It so happened that one rainy season there were terrible rains and the rain-water entered the room where the steel trunk of antiques was lying. No one knew how water seeped into the box, and alas! when the box was opened it was found that all those antiques had fallen a prey to a furious attack of mildew. The said manuscript of that 'Dewan', the most valuable post-card of ustad 'Daag' were all damaged completely and had to be thrown in the dust-bin to be taken away next day by the sweeper for burial some distance away. Extreme agony prevaded the atmosphere which was on our faces. But nothing could be of avail. We moaned and moaned and moaned and then became calm.

Damage had been done, misfortune was at its worst. We reconciled to our fate. After all, whatever is fated cannot be abated. We were totally ruined B.E.R. as they call it in military parlance (Beyond Economic repairs) became bankrupt in every sense. The few articles which survived the onslaught of mildew were salvaged from the debris and subsequently taken away by my eldest brother, Pt.Hari Mohan Lal Zutshi and to the best of my belief, must still be lying with one of his sons since he himself is no more. This is the story of our proud possessions. Let the past be burried. We should now revert to some other topics relevant to our family history.

Messiah, was supposed to be the greatest of the miracle makers this world has even seen. People used to take their relative's dead bodies to him and he turned them alive. How? He used to utter the words "Qum-be-Azni" and then kicked the dead body and immediately the dead became alive and stood up, his "qum" meant 'by the order of God.'. Such were messiha's miracle (aijaz).

My grandfather wrote this couplet on aijaz :-
Aik Qum Kya tere her lafz mein hai ye taasir.
Teri har baat mein aijaz-e-messiha dekha".

The apparent meaning is that while even Messiha had to take shelter behind a 'qum' his 'master' did not need any such shelter and every word he uttered was a miracle in itself.

Here, I must mention that this couplet although written about a hundred year back fitted my Guru's case (Shri Swamiji Maharaj) to the last' groove. Miracles galore. Hundreds of example can be quoted. Seeing is believing and I had personally seen many of them with my eyes wide open. The world may or may not believe it.

My grandfather had the habit of sitting in the toilet for at least half an hour or so and during this period only he composed all his couplets. When he came out of the toilet and started washing his hands, my father had to stand there with his notebook and pen and my grandfather would dictate to him those couplets. This was a daily feature. One day, however he was dictating some couplets which ended with the words "Kisi ki'' my father abruptly interrupted and said. "Kanhaiya Bhai, a couplet in the same rhyme has just come to my mind. Could I include it in your ghazal? What is it? Grandfather asked. My father recited.

Adam main main aram se so raha tha
Yahan kheench laai mohabbat kisi ki.

I believe, many would not understand the true meaning of this couplet. Note for example 'Kheench laai'. This means 'dragged' or 'drawn'. It means that he did not come of his own but was dragged. If so, by whom? Surely by some superior powers which could be none else than my grandfather.

If one could dive a little deeper and try to read something in between the lines, one would understand what this seemingly simply and innocuous looking couplet conveyed.

After all, my father was definitely a chip of the old block. Like father, like son. He was not an ordinary person. Indeed a great spiritual son. He had known about his death a month before he died and had gone to Datia to see Shri Swamiji Maharaj, (my guru and his guru also) to request him to take charge of his sons as he was about to die in a month's time. Swamiji however told him that there was a difference of one week between his calculation and that of my father. Any way, he promised to take charge of all his four sons.

The night he died, he asked my second elder brother Man Mohan to go to Kaiser Bagh where the then Maharaja of Dhaulpur resided and meet him. He would offer him a job. Exactly this is what happened. This is just one example of how great he was - a complete saint in Grihasti.

Those of us who have read, nay, critically studied Shri Swami Ram Kishan Param Hans and how he dragged Swami Vivekanand from the other world to serve the society may find a definite similarity in two cases. My father also served the society and being a teacher through out his life, converted thousands of asses into human being. It is my conviction that he was called by my grandfather for this purpose. One thing I wish to reveal today is (I have never brought this on my lips ever that some times when I looked at Swamiji's face, the picture of my grandfather emerged before me as if I was beholding him - the same roundish face, the same short beard same moustaches and exactly the same stout built. Once or twice it occurred to me that my swamiji in his previous birth might have been my own grandfather, Sanyasis, as a rule, do not have love or hatred towards anyone. They are always away from worldly things but Maharajji's attitude towards me was definitely affectionate, helping and loving beyond words. Shall anybody believe that many times he addressed my wife as "Daughter-in-law". I never saw him addressing any other woman in this manner although hundreds of them came to him. Something must have been there. Last year only (1995) when my younger son-in-law, Brig.S.K.Sapru, was serving in Hissar as a colonel and news spread that his name had been approved for promotion as a Brigadier and that his transfer was imminent I went to Datia and secretly prayed for his posting some where near Datia so that my going to Datia might become more convenient. Babina was in my mind. The same moment Guruji appeared before my closed eyes and asked "Prakashji, why do you want to come to Babina. Am I not already with you always?" I opened my eyes and deeply regretted over my folly. This also gave me a clear indication that my son-in-law was not going to be posted there. This was borne out when his transfer was made from Hissar (Haryana) to Gurdaspur-Punjab. The point here is why should he be with me always unless there was some affinity and affection for each other. This is only one example. There are numerous other examples too to show his special- attachment to me but it won't be wise to repeat them all here. However I will discuss this point in further detail later on.

Our family seems to be unique so far as dreams are concerned.

Right from my Baba till today, we have seen meaningful dreams if something special was to happen, and if all of them were to be collected a whole volume could be written. However I note here only one or two.

One day my Baba told my mother who was in the family way and was expecting her first delivery that she would get a daughter. "How?", My mother asked. He told her that last night he saw a dream in which he saw that he had gone to the Dargah of Khwaja Sahib where an old Burqa-clad woman came out of the "hujra" and raising her veil asked me "Kanhaiya Lal, mein apni aabroo bachane ke liye tumhare pas aai hoon." "Aajao" "I told her," So she is coming. According to mother, the description of that lady which my Baba gave her was "an old woman of about eighty years, dark complexion, short stature etc. Completely matched with my bari didda when she grew old. Immediately, after birth when she started crying every relative of ours who heard her were unanimous in their opinion that she was crying "Allah, Allah". Definitely a muslim woman in her previous birth. Not only that, when she was married, her husband and her in-laws lived in Jaora (M.P.) which was then a muslim princely state governed by a Nawab. According to the State Custom and traditions, no woman could come out of her house without a Burqa and thus, my sister, though a hindu lady wore a burqa all her life. The prayers which she rendered audibly were also of a similar nature. I still remember one line of that prayer and that was "Azdard bey Qaram Feryad rasi lahi" Every inch she had become a muslim lady except in name and religion. ('Hujra' means a prayer room in a mosque or shrine but in the shrines perforated slabs are fixed so that "purdah Nashin" ladies may have the "Deedar" or darshan of the tomb without being seen by the men-folk outside.)

Everybody knows that every child is Christened. So my mother went to my Baba to suggest a name for her (That was the tradition those days when the head of the family was all-in-all).

Baba closed his eyes for a few moments, then opened them and then asked my mother. "Beti, what was the name of Arjun's wife in our mythology?" "Subhadra" my mother replied. He then straight away suggested that that should be the name of this child.

Now see, after many years when she was to be married, several proposals came and considered and rejected. The one, however which came from Jaora was finalised and then it was known that the name of the boy was "Arjun". This shows how high my Baba was in spiritualism. He knew years earlier that one day "Arjun" would come to wed her. Who can beat this?

I understand that my ancestors claimed their descent to one Pt.Janardhan Zutshi who was the teacher of Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Aurangzeb.

My mother used to render good service to my Baba. Everyday she used to massage his head with butter and cream to make his skull tender and soft. I have already stated that he used to perform 'Pranayam' everyday for long hours and my mother told me that his skull had become extremely tender and pulpy exactly like that of a new born child. Baba often used to tell my mother that on his death if his soul bored a hole in the skull (Brahmaand), he would get 'Moksha', i.e. he would be freed from the cycle of births and deaths but if this did not happen, then he will have to take one more birth. He predicted the day of his death and directed my mother not to leave him. The hour of his end was coming fast. He prepared for it by sitting straight on the floor resting his back against a bolster. My mother sat in front of him. He directed her to ensure that he did not go in a coma. He did not desire to become unconscious. After a couple of minutes mother thought he was getting into the process of becoming unconscious although actually he was in a trance. But as directed, she shouted "Bhaijanji Aap Ghafil ho rahe hain". He immediately opened his eyes and said "Nahin mein vision dekh raha tha". My mother then asked as to what he saw and he replied "Chup shah, Mubarak Shah, Babboo Mian - they are all waiting with out stretched hands for me". He then asked mother if she remembered his couplet beginning with "Naam uska..." and my mother promptly saying 'yes' recited it -

"Naam uska ho zabaan per, dil mein ho yaad uski
Jis waqt Jaan meri mere badan se nikle"

He now did not speak but only nodded his head in affirmation. Thereafter he took a very deep breath and made an effort to bore a hole in his 'Brahmaand' but the soul most unfortunately passed away through his eyes which became wide open. And thus the light went out and came in gloom. It pervaded the whole atmosphere. A truly great story ended. After some days when my parents were discussing this issue my mother sadly remarked "Shayad kuch kami rah gayee hogi" May be something more was left to be achieved. A few years back I heard a couplet on this word 'Kami'.

"Jo na ho saka abhi tak tujhe aitbaar-e-ulfat
Mein Samajh gaya Yaqeenan
Abhi mujh mein kuch kami hai"

Saints, generally as a rule do not exhibit their powers and my Baba was not an exception. But, a time comes when they have to do so. He had many disciples both male and female. One day he told my mother that 'Kailaso (some lady about whom I do not remember anything) had rendered good service to him and he therefore granted her two sons but mother had excelled 'Kailaso'.

"I an very happy with you and grant you four sons. He added that daughters would remain two only as they were. Mother had only two daughters at that time and no son. Years passed by and my mother bore exactly four sons - the rest either died or aborted. Can anybody beat it, except of course saints only.

The two daughters were Subhadra and Rupan, while the elder one was married to Pt.Arjun Nath Dar of Jaora (M.P.) the younger one was married to one Pt.Raj Narain Wali of Hardoi (U.P.). She however died shortly after marriage and Mr-Wali re-married; the girl this time being the younger sister of the mother-in-law of Tejan, daughter of Subhadra, my elder sister. Since Rupan died and my mother was left with only one daughter, God gave her another daughter and Baba's prediction of my mother having two daughters was borne out. This is that daughter Raj Kumari (Rajjan) who is still alive by the grace of God although by now she must be about minety. (During the course of writing these memoirs, she too has passed away).

MY FATHER

My father was Christened as Brij Mohan Lal and although the name had become a little longish by the addition of the word 'Lal', it was retained. Perhaps my Baba was enamoured of this word. What is after all 'Lal'.

1. Lal means a son. Even Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are addressed as 'Lal' in their childhood.
2. It means trouble
3. It means perhaps

4. It means hope.

1. 'Lal' is a precious stone of red colour used in making ornaments.

2. 'Lal' is a very pretty and a famous small red bird.

3. 'Lal' means 'red colour' which is considered a very good omen as opposed to black which signifies bad omen. As is known black clothes are generally worn in mourning while red clothes are worn on happy occassions.

4. From red colour the word 'Surkh Rooh' which perhaps denotes success or some achievements which make a person proud.

5. Last, but not the least, my Baba made it his 'Takhallus'. This word must have been really close to his heart.

Perhaps realising its importance, my father also named all his four sons with the addition of this word, namely,

1. Hari Mohan Lal (Bhai Sahib)
2. Man Mohan Lal (Bhai Pearey)
3. Anand Mohan Lal and (Bhai)
4. Prakash Mohan Lal.

Perhaps, he also loved this word and so, in a few couplets that he composed. He used it as his 'Tekhallus' also. Had I realised its importance, I would have also added this word to the names of my two sons, but I was a fool, I must admit this never occurred to me. Thus, it is most regrettable that this important word has now gone completely out of our family and the day I die (I am the last survivor with this word) this word would go out from our family. It is a pity, an irreparable loss.

My Bhaiji was a graduate of those days when matriculation was considered a sufficient qualification for a man to become a deputy collector but Bhaiji always preferred the teaching profession as he thought it to be the noblest of all. He perhaps came to this world with the sole mission of converting "asses" into human beings as I have already mentioned earlier. Not only did he choose the teaching profession for himself but also chose it for his sons as well. Accordingly, his two elder sons, Bhai Sahib and Bhai Pyarey became teachers. The rest two had by then not finished their education and hence he could not see them as teachers.

I am however glad to note that teaching has continued to remain a traditional profession in our family even after Bhaiji. Whlile my eldest daughter Indu is a Reader in English, Her husband Kuldip Masaldan is a Reader in English (both in the Delhi University). Bhai Sahib's son, Shyam Mohan is a Reader in English and his younger sister Asha is also a Reader in a Jalandhar College in Punjab.

I heard from my father one day that Shakespear's Plays were taught in schools in his time. Several times I heard my elders describing my father as a master of English literature. He wrote excellent English. To prove this point, I may mention, that in those days, a morning 'Daily' named 'Leader' used to come out from Allahabad and its Editor in those days was none else than Sir C.Y.Chintamani, a renowned scholar and a widely respected person. The British Govt. in recognition of his genious, had conferred upon him, the title of "Sir". Many persons used to send him their articles for publication in his 'paper', but the report was that the used to throw them in his waste paper basket. However, whenever my father contributed his articles they never met with that treatment. They were always published. Not only did Chintamani send a money 'order' but also invariably a letter (considered a rare privilege) of appreciation in his own hand. Since most of the articles were written during my infancy, I can not dwell upon them but one article he wrote when I had become an adolescent, is still fresh in my memory. It was a long article and its title was "The Grand Trunk Road" I remember to have read it from the 'paper' itself.

My father started his life as a Head Master of a Primary School in Shahpura (in Rajasthan). In a short time he raised the level of that school from 'Primary' to Middle. His reputation then started growing. The Maharaja of Bundi, another princely state in Rajasthan heard about him and offered him a higher salary in his States' Middle School. Father left Shahpura for Bundi. Bauaji told me that her journey from Shahpura along with Bhaiji in a bullock cart, was most thrilling. There was a constant threat of robbers and Bhaiji had been fore-warned against being way-laid. He was however a fearless and robust person and did not mind these threats. He took a drawn sword in his hands and stood like a rock to face any problem. He reassured mother not to worry and she fully cooperated with him. At the time of marriage, mother was just thirteen while father was eighteen.

Mother was "bold and beautiful" but after all a woman so after reaching Bundi safely, she heaved a sigh of relief. Besides his school service, the Maharaja also entrustred his two young sons to him to teach and gave handsome honorarium. Here he soon raised the level of that school to High School. A few years later the then Maharaja of Dhaulpur (Rajasthan) got scent of his reputation and invited him to join this State as Head Master of the States High School on a much higher salary. He too had a foster brother whom he wanted Bhaiji to teach. Bhaiji agreed. Mother told me that a carriage drawn by two horses daily came to our house to take him to the palace for this tution. He was paid fabulously as per the value of a rupee in those day. Every month my father purchased one ``tola" of pure gold which sold at Rs.fourteen per tola. (A "tola" in weight is slightly less than a gram of today). This was done as a ritual as I have already stated above, he had two daughters at that time and this was his preparation for their marriage. Life in Dhaulpur was very peaceful and he was happy and satisfied. He therefore did not try to seek fresh pastures and remained in Dhaulpur till his end. For about thirty years he taught here and was, perhaps, the most respected person in the entire state. At one stage there was no house in Dhaulpur in which his students (even taught by him in past years) were not living.

In his early days i.e. when he was in Shahpura of Bundi, mother recalled, that if somebody wrote a letter to somebody in English, the letter had to cover long distances to find another somebody to read it for him. That was the state of literacy. One newspaper was sufficient for a whole locality (Mohalla).

Bhaiji though absolutely solid and robust like a wrestler, was a victim of several ailments.

He had a chronic bad throat for which he was operated upon as many as sixteen time in his life-time. He then developed diabetes but for that he never took any medicine. To ward it off he only abstained from sugar not a grain of sugar he ever took. Delicacies like jalebis, Halva, Sohan etc. became alien to his month. He was perfect in his determination. Hats off to his will-power. If he had decided not to touch sugar, no power on earth could force him to do so. On the contrary, here I am his son, also suffering from the same disease but never failing to gulp all the sweets of the world, at the first opportunity. Moreover, he always used to go for an early morning brisk walk on the grandtrunck road and covered a distance of three miles each side regularly. How could diabetes ever affect him?

He was very conscious about his dress. He never went out of the house in a dhoti or pyjama. Always in a decent suit, hat and a tie. He always wore full-boots as was the fashion those days and those boots were manufactured by a famous British Company known as "Dawson". "Dawson" was the boot-wear of the elite and was exclusively worn by the upper strata of the society because of high cost. But by the time I grew up, those boots had already given place to the modern "shoes" which themselves went in exile later. Times do change and with that the fashions. He also wore a sola-hat. He loved the English language tremendously. Few can imagine how much. In comparision to English, he probably looked at other languages with disdain. Several times he was heard saying

"Parho faarsi, becho tel
Yeh dekho karman ke khel"

Here, I must give at least one example to prove this point. From the very child hood, I was never serious about my studies. Children generally, have to be taught, scolded and thrashed in order to inculcate in them some love for education and only then they shine but in my case, this did not happen.

One of the reasons for this was that since I was my mother's last child she treated me as the apple of her eyes. She definitely loved me excessively. So, if my father ever started teaching me someday and during which period, gave me a slap (as is the practice) my mother would come out furiously to stop my crying and shouting at my father that by his iron hands (wrestler's hands) he would one day definitely damage my brain and then for the whole of my life I would never be able to study at all and my life would be ruined. Not only that, she also reminded him about "destiny" playing its own part. She would say, what is destined to happen shall happen. What I have to become one day, I shall become. Then why all this fuss. She would take me away and after offering me some sweets etc. would console me. What effect this had on me subsequently? I became a total blank in studies concentrating all the time on playing only. However, I never failed in any examinations. The main reasons was that all my class teachers were my father's "taughts" and so, out of regards for him, never failed me and passed me even by giving "grace marks" wherever necessary. This practice went on unchecked till I passed the ninth class. But, the tenth examination was "Board examination". My school was affiliated to the then Board of High School and Secondary Education Rajputana Ajmer Marwar and Gwalior. My local teachers had now absolutely no say here. Gwalior was my examination centre. Our class teacher herded us to Gwalior for the said exam. I already knew what was in store for me but I appeared, Bhaiji had taught me some English as a preparation for this exam. When the result came out, I failed but subsequently, when the mark-sheets arrived in the school, it was found that while I had failed in all the other four subjects I had passed in english. When my father saw it, he told mother that he was proud of me and was very happy. Absolutely no anguish on his face. He told her that he would have hung his head in shame if I had failed in English. He did not bother at all about other subjects saying that I would make them up during the next year. According to him, it would have brought a bad name to the family if I had failed in English. I think you can now gauge the extent of his love for this language. Next year, I did pass as predicted by him. Every cloud has a silver lining and every sorrow its bright side, so, although I was dunce as far as studies were concerned, the silver living was my memory. Perhaps that made up for several deficiencies. While preparing english for that unfortunate High School exam, one day, I told my father that our English class teacher had asked us to write an essay on "A Journey" and that 1 did not know at all what to write, I requested him to dictate this essay to me. He readily agreed and started dictating. Many would not believe, that several sentences of that essay are still fresh in my mind I reproduce a few of them.

"One day I went to Agra to see the Taj .... After visiting it I found that in its vicinity, was also an ancient temple. Though small and old, it was magnificcent in its pristine beauty. The road leading to it reached in a zig-zag way and was very pleasant to look at the idols were so very life-like that one was actually in a position to behold

God face to face and banish all ignoble ideas. They enabled the worshippers to realise that mysterious state where God in Man is one with Man in God."

The same essay appeared in the exam and I immediately wrote out the crammed essay. I am sure the examiner must have been thrilled and must have given me full marks. Thus I passed in my work. Bhaiji was never a poet but in his veins definitely flew the blood of a poet and therefore could muster a few couplets if and when ever desired. One day there was a lot of hubbub in Dhaulpur and people looked as if they were preparing for celebrating some festival. A little later, news spread that "Jubilee" of king George V was to be celebrated. The state's political secretary Mr.A.N.Thorpe had issued instructions that this should be celebrated in a befitting manner. Bhaiji called for our drill master, Shri Pancham Singh and directed him to organise a torch-light drill at the bungalow of Mr.Thorpe where he would also be present. Incidently, I also took part in the said drill. A mushaira was organised in which local poets, actually more poetasters then poets, participated. My father also participated and recited a ghazal specially composed by him for this occasion. I remember only its "Matla" (the first couplet).

"Jaraj Pancham ki jubli hai aaj
Shah-e-Shahaan ki jubli hai aaj"

Cash prizes were awarded to all. Pt.Kala Dhar Tewari the State's finance secretary who also held the charge of department of education as well became cross with my father due to some reasons best known to him and recommended to the Maharaja, Shri Udai Bhan Singh, that he be retired as he had become too old to teach and should be replaced by a younger teacher. Maharaja was camping at that time in England and so this file was sent to him in England. The Maharaja returned it with the remarks that he knew the old man very well and considered him better than many a young teacher. However, he questioned the very wisdom of Pt.Kala Dhar to send that file to England "what was so urgent about it that it could not wait for my return to India," He wrote. Pt.Kala Dhar was stung by the Maharaja decision. it was indeed a slap on his face. Bearing this ill-will in his mind he found some pretext and called for Bhaiji's explanation. Bhaiji explained. In his explanation, besides whatever else he had written, he wrote one sentence which got engraved on my heart and I must quote it.

"My conscience is clear.., while it is they who commit the mischief, it is we, who incur the odium." This was actually read out by Bhaiji to Bhai Pearey and I just heard it and remembered it.

Shri Kala Dhar was bowled and the case was closed. This can also 'be treated as another example of his flair for English.

HIS POOJA

My father never visited any temple and did not believe in idol worship. The only "Mantra" he had heard was 'SOHAM' which meant 'ANALHAQ' what 'Mansoorl used to say, "I am God." He was opposed to the theory of duality and maintained that a man has only to see within himself and realise what he was. However, besides this 'Mantra' he also read quite regularly 'Geeta' and particularly the 16th and 17th Chapter. He also had a copy of 'Geeta' (the translated version by Annie Besant in English) He seldom read the 18th Chapter.

Since he read them audibly I could not fail to hear them and retained a few of these 'Shlokas' in my memory which I remember till date. His routine was rather unique and unusual. He always had his dinner at 7 P.M. and then went to sleep immediately there after. He would then wake up at 12 and sat on the bed itself and started reciting this 'Mantra' continuously till 4 A.M. he never used a rosary for this purpose. At 4 A.M. he would get up, shave wash and dress up and then leave for his long morning walk. Safety razors were not in vogue those days and so he also used a cut-throat razor, as they were called then but shaved daily. These razors were of German make and were considered the best. 'Kropps' was perhaps the name of the manufacturer but I am not very definite about it. After this walk he would change his clothes and after showing to mother that he had duly washed his hands, prepare tea for all of us. He had a 'PRIMUS'

Kerosine stove made in 'Sweden' which he used. Within about 5 minutes this tea was ready and we all par took it. Water was boiled in a kettle, made of 'Tamchini' as it was then called. It was used exclusively for this purpose. Whole life Bhalji liked only 'Liptons' yellow label tea". It had great colour and its fragrance was fantastic.

In later years however Bhai Sahib substituted it with 'Liptons' green label. Bhai Sahib considered it superior to 'yellow' because of its smell, its flavour although it did not give any strength to the decoction. It was a much lighter tea than the yellow one. Obviously, Bhaiji did not like lighter tea and continued with his favourite one. But, since then we all have become its slaves and even today although it costs far more than most other brands, we are till today still continuing. Bhaiji drank one full large tumbler of tea with out sugar of course. He would then retire to his apartments. In those days there were, in most houses, two apartments 'Mardana' and 'Zenana'. Mother then engaged herself in the preparation of food. Winter hours in the school were from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and so father had to have his lunch by 9.30 A.M. and leave for the school which was at a walking distance. After his return from the school he would again have his glass-full of evening tea and then engaged himself in gossips with Bauji and us reading out couplets from the Ghazals of great poets like 'Ghalib' and 'Daag'. Herein I would like to repeat once again that hearing them made me remember many of them for ever. Besides this pastime, he sometime asked Bhai Peary what he was reading those days. One day, he replied. "Hardy" Father immediately reminded him that we were a happy family and need not be influenced by a pessimistic writer." I notice you are reading too much of "Hardy" these days. You must have learnt that the only refrain in all his novels is only one - Happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain" I would advise you to read 'Meredith' mistead. He is an optimist'' I was also present there and heard this conversation. I can swear that it was the first time when I heard these names of the two great Novelists but only God knows how they got engraved on my heart for ever.

I had never read a word of them till then. After such gossips and jokes etc., he found that the time had come for his dinner and so had it and then slept to get up again at 12 P.M. and then began his Mantra. Actually he did it through the breath and said half of it while inhaling and the rest half while exhaling.

So - HAM. This later on he translated into a couplet and I would deal with it later on.

HIS DREAM

One night he dreamt that, he had gone to attend a Mushaira. The hall was big and filled up. All the poets and the audience except he managed to have a seat in the front row on the left side of the presiding officer. The presiding officer (janab-i-Sadr) was about ninety years old, had grey hair, grey breard and moustaches and was a tall and a thin man as described by Bhaiji. He was calmly listening to the various ghazals and appreciating them. Suddenly, the eyes of the old man fell on Bhaiji and he immediately invited Bhaiji to the dias and asked him to recite his ghazal. Bhaiji said he was not a poet but had come only to listen to others, but the Sadr did not listen, insisted that he must come and recite something Bhaiji had no option and went to the stage and sat by the side of the old man and started reciting his ghazal, I do not remember the entire ghazal but a few couplets that I remember, I reproduce

"Tu Zikr-e-Anal Haq Nafas se Karhardam
Dui ke Gumaan to mitaye chala ja
Raza Aur Tasleem tu rakh apna aayeen
Tu kadmon pe sar ko jhukaye chalaja
Asar hoga beshak in aahon ka ek din
Tu khoob hum ko zalim sataye chalaja
Dua teri aye 'Lal' maqbool hogi
Tu dukh usko apna sunaye chalaja"

There was one more couplet of which I have been able to remember only the second line and that is -

"Tu Mehboob se law lagaye chalaja"

The dream ended, father woke up and noted down the entire ghazal on a piece of paper. I think, by now it is crystal clear that everybody in our family, right from my grand father, breathed poetry, slept in poetry, wrote up poetry and though no poets themselves, were not less than any. For every occasion, they had a ready couplet befitting the occasion., Just look at the following example. One day I asked Baua just casually, how come, we have not got a single photograph of her in our house and her reply was

Beta" "Aik se Jaan do huey waan Lutf-e-yaktai Nahin
Is liye tasveer jaana, humne khich wayi Nahin"

Father was also present there and immediately added the following :

"Daam mange tha mussavir, pas thi pie nahin
Is liye tasveer jaana humne khich wayi Nahin
Daant tootay, nak chapti aankh sharma-i-hui
Is liye tasveer jaana humne khich wayi Nahin

The matter ended jocularly at that point.

For a possible future researcher, (which though today I consider only wishful thinking) I can provide useful clues from which this whole ghazal of my father could be retrieved. In Dhaulpur, those days, a Tikku family resided in our vicinity Pt.Shiv Shankar Tikku was the head. He had two sons, the elder one was Piarary Kishan and the younger Pt. Saroop Kishan (popularly known as Munna Bhai) and his wife Pukhraj, commonly called "gillo didda"). This Piaray Kishan died a little early, leaving his very beautiful wife called "Chhoti Bhabi" as a widow without any sons. For some years she lived with her father-in-law and brother-in-law, Shri Saroop Kishan. But, after some year when Saroop Kishan got married, the two women could not see eye to eye (as generally happens). (They say, a hundred males can live together peacefully but not two women.) This was true in this case too. It may however be noted here that the elder one was not dependent on her brother-in-law as the State had granted her a life - long pension of Rs.25/- p.m. in recognition of her Late husband's services to the State, No need to repeat that this seemingly meagre amount, was more than enough for a person to live decently in those days. When the matters came to a head, the elder one, out of disgust left Dhaulpur and went to Kanpur. In Kanpur (then Cawnp ore) there lived Pt.Shiv Shankar's real brother, Pt.Siri Kishan Tikku. He was a government pleader and was very well to do. But he had no son. He had a daughter who was married in a "Dar" family. He therefore kept his son-in-law with his issues with him. Most probably, "Chhoti Bhabi" must have gone to reside with them. So if, efforts are made to trace the paper left by her, this whole ghazal can perhaps be retrieved. It is within my knowledge that she had noted it down in a note-book from which she had once read it in my presence to somebody. I do not remember his name. However it seems to me too far fetched an idea.

THE "MOONTH"

In several small towns in Rajputana (now Rajasthan) or perhaps in Bengal and Kamakhya too there lived some people, mostly (in Assam) of backward classes, who indulged in antisocial activities like committing petty thefts and practicing an art to kill one's enemies by attaining "Siddhi" of some very low-grade "Tantrik Mantra".

Anybody could hire them for this purpose. For this purpose, as I learned later, they took an earthen pot (haandi) perforated from the sides to allow air to pass in and out. They would then fill it up with a raw egg, a small pair of scissors, a little of the sacred thread ("Kalava") a very small sized knife, a little mercury oxide (sindoor) etc., and then over all this stuff, placed a lighted "diva" (lamp) and covered it with a red cloth. They then recited their 'Mantra' and released it in the air. Many would not believe it today since this art has become extinct and only a very few people actually may be knowing about it. As soon as that visual was released, it flew and fell at the head of the person, who was supposed to be sleeping at dead of night and to kill whom was the sender's aim.

There was a teacher named Mr.Bhargava under Bhaiji who was frantically aspiring to become the Head Master and had also the full blessings of Pt.Kala Dhar Tewari, the then Director of Education. When he saw that Bhaiji was in no mood to oblige him, he tried this trick. He contacted a menial who was known to be adept in this art and promised him some handsome rewards if he succeeded. That fool agreed, mostly because that was the way he earned his living. Now, there are two theories about this art, one was that if, for some reason, the attempt failed the Handi would return to the sender and he would die. The sender thus gets punished. He has to suffer. The second was that if the person on whose life this attempt was made, was a highly religious and a pious person and endowed with a will power, this moonth was very unlikely to succeed. moreover, as it is released on a dark dead of night, the target should be found to be sleeping and only then it could fall and burst on his head. These fools did not perhaps realise that my father had all the prerequisites to ward off this silly attempt. So on that fateful black night, my father was sitting and reciting his Mantra on the bed itself as his daily ritual (as I have already explained earlier). Suddenly, he saw a deadly looking shining star hovering over the courtyard where father's bed was, and f ell with a bad thud just by the side of his bed and burst. He at once understood that it was "Moonth" sent by somebody to kill him. Baua also woke up. She immediately spat on the whole stuff cleaned the entire place and threw the whole dirty stuff out side the house. She then washed the place completely, poured some ganga]al on the spot and then spread her "Aasan,' (mantra used for Pooja purposes) and with her rosary in her hand firmly sat on the exact spot and went on meditating till day-break. This was all narrated to me by Baua years later after the occurrence. Father, though slightly perturbed carried on his own routine. He also left for his morning walk, thereafter preparing the morning tea for all of us and then going to the school in the same normal way. But, in the heart of his hearts he was still wondering as to who that fellow could be. He apparently had no enemies. His profession was such. In school, he noticed that Mr.Bhargava the Asst. Head Master had not attended that day. He had sent in an application for leave stating that he was feeling lot of pain in his eyes and so, was unable to teach.

Second day he again absented himself and yet again, the third day, the same problem. On the fifth day news went round the state that Mr.Bhargava had become totally blind inspite of all the treatments available in Dhaulpur.Ultimately, since he could no longer see, there was no question of his continuing as a teacher, he resigned. The matter apparently closed on a sad note and Bhaiji had still not the slightest inkling of what was behind all this episode. After a month or so, aided by another person, the said Mr.Bhargava came to our house and (according to Baua who was an eye-witness) lay prostrate at the feet of my Bhaiji and begged pardon. "Kindly excuse me Head Master Sahib I am a Sinner, I am guilty of a heinous crime and unless you excuse me I shall not be able to die peacefully. "What are you talking about Bhargava, I do not understand", Bhaiji asked. Mr.Bhargava then blurted out that it was he who had caused a "Moonth" to be exploded over his head. He said he had become mad , badly misguided by some rascals but had paid the penalty. Father lifted him up-offered him a chair and a hot cup of tea and told him to forget about the whole issue. Bhaiji however, very politely reminded him -

"Bhai Jise Ram Rakkhe, usey kaun chakkhe"

I believe almost none in the present generation would have heard this word "Moonth" in his life time and so it is impossible to make them believe that in effect this tantrik art was once prevalent in some parts of this country. Some people of my generation may have heard about it, some of them can also be found who know the art but do not practice it. If the saying "fact is stranger than fiction" was to be believed, this case would be one. There is not an iota of untruth in what I have narrated above because I actually heard it from my mother only who was an eye witness and yet, none would be prepared to believe because such things had became extinct before they were born. Last year, when I went to Datia, I met a Pujari of the Shiva temple, (located in the precincts of Shri Peetambra Peeth itself but not of Shri Peetambra Mai) I had been meeting him in the past as well because I go to Datia quite often. His name is Shri Kanta Rawat. This time however there was something special. He was trying to catch some evil spirit by which a relative of a friend of mine had been possessed. He had kept an empty bottle with him and was busy in the act of that tantrik 'Kriya' and soon, the said spirit was to come find itself in the bottle which would then be closed and taken to the banks of Karan Sagar and buried there. The possessed person would then become normal. This is now another story not relevant to us. The thing is that when I was chatting with him, he revealed that he had also learnt the art of firing "Moonth" in his early years but then never practiced it. On my questioning he told me all about the various articles with which the handi was filled before firing. His own house was located near the Rajgarh gate and one of his tenants used to be the former science teacher of the Lord Reading High School of which my Bhai Sahib was the Head Master. His name was Amar Singh and we had very good, rather brotherly relations with the family. The story is somewhat similar to the ones, my servant Ram Hit tells all the time about ojhas.

In fact, Ramu's own daughter Usha had been possessed by a ghost - ("Bhoot") and had become wild, but an ojha of his village treated and cured her. Who would believe? Sometime he even gets engraged when we try to convince him that there is nothing like a "Bhoot" he insists and argues that since there are no "Bhoot" in the big cities, You people are not prepared to believe. He simply won't deny their existence in the villages and about the efficacy of the ojha's treatments.

HIS LAST DAY

The same ablutions, the same puja, (this was written on the morning of the Nov.96 with tears all the time flowing from my eyes) the same "Gosht roti" the same morning walk and the same school, meaning there was absolutely no change in his routine even on his last day. Although he definitely knew in advance that it was his last day, he did not show it to anybody outwardly. In the school, however, he had dropped a hint. When he found some students loitering and making noises, and were apparently not serious he told them to come to his class and study. He told them "Agar parhna hai to aajaao mein ab koi roz roz parhanee thori aaonga. At that moment, the students could not realise the true meaning of his words but later on when he died, it dawned on them what he had said. After the school hours, he walked down to home as usual. At 7 P.M. he had his dinner, as usual. After dinner, he asked Baua to give him a paan. This was however unusual. Though we had maintained a "Pan-daan" in our house (Baua and others in the family were fond of these leaves) father never tasted a "Paan". Yes, before asking for a "Paan" he had also asked for a cup of hot milk. This was again extremely unusual. He never drank milk. By these actions of his Baua and Bhai Pearey became a little suspicious but did not say anything except watching him. An attack of paralysis had just started taking place and was effecting his tongue also. So what he spoke then was not very clear. "Bhai Pearey" noticed his staggering voice and immediating shouted "Bhaiji" (we addressed father thus) how are you talking. First he tried to hide and only replied that since he had taken out his denture, his speech had become effected. Bhai Pearey immediately took out the denture lying near by in a cup of water in which it was soaked for the night and handed it over to him for fixing it in his mouth. He did it but he knew he could not hide the truth any more. Kaiser Bagh was the palace of the Maharaja of Dahulpur, Sri Udai Bhan Singh. He then uttered the following words in the same staggering voice -

"Beta, tum Kaiser Bagh chaley jaana, raja tumhein school mein naukri de denge. Nanna ko bula lena. Tum log baari baari se yahan beth te jaana. mein to ab soya to gehri neend hi so-oonga" that is all. Brain haemorrage had now taken place and he went into a coma. Both Bhaiji and Baua addressed, Bhai Sahib as "Naana". Immediately a telegram was sent to Datia and next day Bhai Sahib arrived. He sat near him and loudly spoke in his ears "Bhaiji, mein aagaya hoon". Though father was in a coma and unable to speak, from his deep breath a sound came like "Hoon". It was quite audible to all and even I who was sitting by his side, heard it clearly. Had he that much of consciousness even in unconsciousness. After a few hours, he breathed his last. The only thing remarkable in his death, was, from my point of view, the way he died. I have seen many a death in my life. People get bed-ridden, suffer from various ailments, shit and urinate on the beds.- their attendants have to wash all that every day and they actually tire out due to continuous attendance day and night. Some actually pray secretly for their early deaths so that they could be released from the unbearable agony. But in this case, no attendance was required, no shit and no urine. Here was the grand old man sleeping majestically in perfect peace, unmindful of entire world what a death! I must exclaim sincerely. I always pray to god to grant me a similar death when my time comes. I don't want to rot on the sick bed nor do I ever desire to be taken to the hospital just for the sake of fulfilling some formalities like getting some drips or oxygene etc. to delay the inevitable. Here I get reminded of a couplet.

"Hu ye is Qadar Mohazzib kabhi ghar ka muhn na dekhan.
Kati umr hotlon mean, marey aspatal jaakar"

I think I have already made it clear to my children that they should never shift me to a hospital but to allow me to die a peaceful death at home itself.

Noor Mohammed, popularly known as Noora, our family tailor who had for long years stitched Bhaiji's clothes, was summoned to stitch his last dress as well as shroud I saw him doing it tearfully. His eyes had become red with tears as I watched him from a very close range. After a bath, he was laid on the pier and when we, all four brothers raised him on our shoulders. Bauaji all of a sudden, shouted towards those present there, "See, Raja Dashrath is going on the shoulders of his four sons Ram, Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughan". Needless to say that she was wailing weeping and cried as if she had lost her senses, she had broken off her bangles and indeed it was a pathetic sight which few could bear to see. Hearts of the bravest could melt. The procession marched through the main bazaar where hundreds of men and women showered flowers on him. Later on, I heard people saying that at least two to three maunds of flowers must have been showered and the crowd was the thickest ever seen by them. The main reason was that in every house lived his own students who not only respected but actually loved him.

At the banks of river chambal, where he was cremated, literally thousands had gathered and people said it looked like a "mela". And thus, alas! the truly long and a great story ended and he became a part of our domestic history.

HIS FOOD HABITS

Bhaiji had always a fixed menu, both for his lunch as well as dinner. In the mornings he had meat with lot of soup in it with loaves of bread, while in the evenings he had Paranthas and one vegetable plus a little quantity of curd (mixed with a little salt and cumin seeds) and if the vegetables happened to be Pumpkin or Brinjal he would mix it with that curd to make "Raita"). This used to be the daily routine. However, if some evening Bauaji were to ask him as to what would he like to eat his patent reply humourously used to be (in the same singing tune).

"Roti na khaao saiyan puri bana doon
Aaloo ki tarkari mein rookhi khanen na doongi"

Actually, this was the line of a folk-song-sung by the Dhaulpuri villagers. They used to go to karauli once a year in batches of fifty, hundred or even two hundreds men and women together, on foot and during this long march of about hundred and fifty miles, sang. Another line of the same song was,

"Jo languria tope kurta na ho ga
Phariya (orhni) pher sila daangi"

There is a renowned temple of "Kaila Devi" in Karauli and thousand s of devotees go there to worship every year as people go to Vashno Devi. (Once I had also an opportunity to go there by car lent by a good friend of mine Pt.Shiva Nath Sharma, when I was staying with my eldest son Yogi at Jhansi. A Bhairon temple in the same area is also very famous for granting boons. It is also very ancient).

(Karauli also like Dhaulpur used to be a princely state before independence but now forms part of the present day Rajasthan.)

So he had puries and vegetable made of potato (boiled pealed and then fried). In this vegetable however he never wanted any other spices except salt and black paper. A cup of curd would also be there. Bhaiji was a strict non-vegetarian. He believed that pulses and vegetables taken in even little quantities caused enormous roughage.

While if one takes even enormous quantities of meat, the roughage would still be small. In support of his logic he used to cite a Persian couplet.

"Qalil-ul ghiza kaseelul fizool"
kaseelul ghiza, Qalil-ul fizool

(Some confusion might have crept here due to my wrong understanding this clearly). Deviations from this daily schedule also used to take place during holidays. For example some day "Kashmiri Koftas" were cooked which Bhaiji loved to eat with Moong ki kichhri which he always called "Moongh Pulav" because every gram of rice and Moong was separate and compared them to "Jasmine buds" particularly when they were seasoned with "raisins" and some finely chopped ginger. Chicken and fish were rarely seen in our house but deer was cooked if some one had gone for a shikar. Koftas made from venison are supposed to be the tastiest. No other meat can compete with it. But, this taste can not be described "The proof of pudding lies in the eating there of" Eating is believing. One day Bhaiji heard that a certain young person had died. Enquiries revealed that he had eaten a bitter cucumber (Kheera) drank some water over it and then suffered a fatal attack of cholera. Since then, Bhaiji ordered that no "Kheera" would ever enter our house and these orders were so strict that till he lived, we never saw a "Kheera" in our house except once in a year. When on "Janam Astmi" Bauaji got one not for eating but for celebrations. She used to make a cut in the middle of "Kheera" and insert a small metal idol of 'Lord Krishna' in it. It was then taken out at exactly twelve at night signalling the Lord's birth. After his arti, etc., she would break her day long fast and would distribute 'Prasad' and all other delicacies prepared by her for this very special occasion. These included "Khas ka Halwa". This was indeed the most delicious preparation but made only once a year that too for this day. It needed many hours to prepare it. First the Khas were to be soaked in water and washed several times to make it dust free then dried for some hours over a sheet of clothes. When right it used to be grounded and then fried (like any other Halwa preparation) till it became golden brown. Besides she made "Patris" of various dry-fruits as also those from melon seeds (duly peeled). Bauaji always kept a fast every Sunday and ate only one meal in the evening.

MY MOTHER

My maternal grand mother (Nani) wife of Pt.Rattan Lal Tikku bore only two children, a boy and a girl. Son was Krishna Murari, a handsome fair complexioned boy who at 18 years, duly married, died, while trying to loot a kite and slipping from the roof. I had met his wife when I was still a child when Baua went to Meerut and I accompanied her. The girl child was none else than my mother. She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth as the saying goes. Here I just can not help exclaiming "versatile genius - thy name was

Mohinishwari!"

She was a genius in cooking, knowledge, learning, wisdom say everything. She knew almost everything about almost everything under the sky. Ustad Zauq's description fitted her well

"Qismat hee se laachar hoon
aye Zauq wagar na
Har fun main hoon Hushyar mujhe kya nahi Aata"

No doubt, every house wife cooked in those days for her family so what was special about 'Bauji' (as the children addressed her) well, cooking is one thing but to cook it in a way that people should say with one voice that they had not tasted such a superb dish in the past brings you pride. She knew the intricacies of the art of cooking. For example if while cooking meat, she found that it had not become tender even after cooking, she would immediately put two or there pieces of areca nuts in the pots which quickly made it tender.

Sometimes when she noticed that salt in excess of proportion had been put, she would at once knead a little flour and from that dough, make out a few balls and put them into the cooking pot. They soaked the excess salt. These were then thrown out before serving and none could complain of salt's excess. Besides there were so many things connected with cooking which she taught me. The exact proportion of the spices, water etc. with the result that I could boast even if I had to cook say even 20 to 30 kgs. of meat in one go, I would not fail to make its taste ideal. Even now, perhaps I can do it. The variety of colours which she provided to the dishes was unparalleled. No two dishes looked alike. Every dish had a different flavour. In other fields also she simply excelled. She was thirteen when married to Bhaiji who was eighteen at that time. My Nana, Pt.Ratan Lal Tikku was an accounts officer with the Railways in those days when new Railway lines were being laid through the jungles and so he had to pass his nights in those thick jungles where there was every fear of wild animals who devoured human beings. The British Officers were highly pleased with him and he was given a salary of 400/- Rs. plus other perks in the form of foreign liquor, other allowance etc.

He knew English very well and that was his plus point. Because of his fantastic salary he could manage a large joint family of about fifty persons. It does not mean that the others member of the family did not earn. What is meant is that the family was quite affluent there were Kashmiri Cooks who cooked food for fifty persons at a time and an army of servants. When my mother got married, she came to the house of saints. The living here was just hand to mouth and being the only woman in the house, she had to do all the house hold chores. Naturally being a young girl, became disgusted and in that mood composed the following couplets :

“Kaam wo mujh se liya karne ke the mardon ke
Phir mera jism bhi mardana banaya hota
Gar meri umr faqiri mein basar honi thi,
Phir mera dil bhi faqirana banaya hota”
Is aqal ne mujhe her waqt pareshan rakkha
Kyon aqal mand banaya, na banaya hota.

Imagine her age and the sentiment those couplets convey. Bhaiji took it to his Baba, remarking “Qazi ke ghar ke choohey bhi sayane hote hein” and recited. There is no doubt that he had understood every word of it but did not comment except saying similingly that the correct pronounciation of the word aqal is “aql” and not “aqal”. Yes, so far as her cooking went, no two dishes prepared by her had the same scent and flavour or colour. If in some dish she would use nutmeg and javitri, in other saffron, in yet another fenugreek and her self made Kashmirl Bariyan which was a speciality. The baryan prepared by her were so popular that many ladies actually begged from her to give them some. Their very rememberance waters my mouth even today. Another dish would be seasoned by saffron (mixed in keora water) to make it delectable and more delicious. Her recipe for making Kashmiri ‘Koftas’ was some what different. To prepare them she would take a few roasted grams, get them fully peeled, then powdered and then mixed this powder with the batter. She would also boil fully ripe tomato (absolutely red) then peel if off and mixed its pulp with the batter. This process made them extra ordinarily soft.

She would tend some vegetables with dried fenugreek. Not only did she cook them but also made it a point to teach me with practical demonstration.How long can one go on dwelling on her cooking abilities. Another trait of her character was to cure several diseases herself without the aid of doctors with ready recipes made from Ayurvedic and unani medicines. Some were surprisingly in a poetic form and thus could be remembered by heart with ease for instance.

> **"Banapsha (perhaps also bamatsha) Mulehti wa khatmi Lisori mila kar ke misri mein sab thori thori, pakaa kar ke pee lijiye subhosham kahan ki thi khansi kahan ka zukaam"**

with this prescription she cured many cases of cough and catarrh. Once it so happened that Bhai got a very nasty attack of cough and despite all the unani and allopathic treatments his misery did not abate. More than two months thus passed. Baua, naturally got seriously worried and slept in that worry. She then dreamt that an elderly person appeared before her with grey hair all over. He told "Beti, why don't you try the old traditional medicine which you already know. Only add one more ingredient to it and that is "Munh bandhi aak ki kaliyan". The old prescription was "Kakra singhi, gond babul, Namak lahori, peela mool".

She got up. It was morning hours. First thing in the morning she sent a servant to bring these medicines and the buds of that flower, ground them into powder and made pills of the size of peas and after drying them for sometime, filled them in a large bottle and started administering them to Bhai. She told me that Bhai was completely cured within a fortnight. Yes for those who are unaware of this plant, I may add that this plant is a self-growing species and grows in abundance particularly in North India and a peculiar distinguishing feature is that if you pluck a leaf, some milk-type fluid comes out and its leaves are also thick. It flowers, but the buds before they actually turn into flowers, are plucked and used for medicinal purposes. Its medicinal name is however, "calotropis". I have it in my medicine chest and I have also cured with it, several patients who suffered from a particular type of excruciating pain which runs from the hip-joint to the knees. It is a homeopathic medicine and I use it in its mother tincture form (No potency). There were other such prescriptions for dysentry ep. like "Beedana and gaozuban" etc. but I would not like to dwell on them in details here as it may prove an exercise in futility. After all who is going to use them now? One day Bauji told me that one of my ancestors was once the Raja of Bareilly. His name was Pt.Atma Ram. Although I heard the name and still remember it I could never get an opportunity to go to Bareilly to search for the relevant revenue records of that period to verify the veracity of her statement. Perhaps it required lot of research work.

Similarly, she once told me that her maternal grand father

(Nana) Pt.Ajudhiya Pershad Munshi was the tutor of maharaja Scindia of Gwalior. He had an elephant with a silver "howdah" which was tethered at his house and on which he used to go to the Sindias palace to teach him. She pointedly mentioned that the Maharaja sat on a lower level than the tutor and it was considered in those days a sign of unusual respect which the rajah showed to him. I had an occasion to accompany her to Gwalior once when I was only a very small child and where she had gone to meet her maternal uncles I noticed there that the grandeur and glamour of yester years had completely faded and the family looked absolutely middle-class. Indeed, times had changed what was yesterday is not today and what is today, shall not be tomorrow and this is how the world goes on.

We were in Dhaulpur but Baua's nephew (her sister's son) was at Agra, Pt. Kashi Pershad Kaul who always treated her as his own mother and she treated him as her own son. The reason was that his mother had died very early and my maternal grand father had brought him up and maintained his family many years back. He had also lost his wife early and was living in our ancestral house at Kucha Sadhu Ram in Phulatti bazar Agra. Mother was very fond of the all time famous "Petha" and "Daal Moth" of a very old and renowned shop of "M/s Bhim Sen Baij Nath", It still exists and is still famous. So, often, whenever she had a quarrel with father, she would run to Agra, enjoyed his hospitality and after a few days' stay would again come back. This was repeated not very often but often at least. So one day, when a quarrel ensued she told father that she was "dukhi" in his house and had decided to leave him for ever. She said now she was not going to Agra but to Mathura to stay permanently at the Ashram of Anand Mai Ma. Ma was a reputed saint, fully enlightened (Sidhh) and had many ladies as her disciples. Several aged Kashmiri Pandit ladies of decent families had left their homes and were staying at her "aashram". So my mother also went there for a permanent residence. That very day, when she was sitting with other inmates maa's eyes fell on Baua and seeing a new face, curiously asked another lady sitting by her side and who knew Baua as to who this lady was.

The reply was "Mohiniji" and the saint then querried. "Mohini Sukhiya? There was an affluent Sukhiya "family in Kanpur at that time and an old lady from this family used to go to Mathura to Anand Mai Maa's darshan and Sat Sangh.

Sukhiya is also one of the surnames in Kashmiri Pandits like Kaul, Dar, Zutshi etc. So the lady again replied "She is not Mohini Sukhiya" but Mohini Zutshi, "To this 'Maa' replied" so what? "Sukhiya to hai" This word floored Baua she thought that she was unnecessarily considering herself 'dukhi'. When 'Maa' had said I am sukhiya (meaning Sukhi) how could I ever be "dukhi". The result was that she was back in Dhaulpur by the first available train. When father asked her what happened, she narrated the whole story. When my father joked as to how she had returned, she replied. Look, this is my house.

Who are you to stop me from coming here. One thing I forgot to mention about my father was his intuition. Since I was an eye witness to it, I am mentioning it. There was a large "Chabutra'' outside in front of our house and Bhaiji sometimes went out and sat on it - all alone.

"What are you doing here, sitting alone?" Baua would say. Father usually replied "I think 'Nanna' is coming from Datia and so I am waiting for him. There was absolutely no hint or letter from Bhai Sahib that he was coming but, surprisingly, a tonga would be seen lurking towards our house and Nanna had arrived. Mother would question him and he would reply that he had a sudden urge to come here to meet us (particularly Bhaiji and herself) and so this "unexpected" visit. This happened not once but on several occasions. How many would believe it? Of course this is considered science, "Telepathy" is you remember me and I remember you at the same moment of time though physically we may be at long distances.

Kashmiri Pandits in those days particularly were known for their fair complexion. Baua had also that pure white complexion and could easily be mistaken for a European lady not like the Europeans of today of whom Paul Scott lamented in one of his novels that many had lost their original white complexion due to successive cross breeding and had turned into reddish brown Britishers.

WHAT SHE TAUGHT ME

Besides the 'Rubai's and 'Qatas' she also taught me immemorable couplets of Sant Tulsi Das, Bhagat Kabir, Rahim and others which conveyed moral lessons, sermons etc. I did cram them and still remember then but her most important contribution from my point of view was the introduction of 'Jai Ram ji ki' as greeting. She always insisted that if one goes out of the house, he or she, must say it to all of us and also on his return. In the evening when lights were switched on our house echoed with Jai Ram ji ki Sahib - everyone present at this moment, saying it loudly in unison.

The first thing she always insisted upon was that one should see a "smiling face" the moment one gets up in the mornings. She used to rush towards me every morning without fail and would say "Jai Ram ji ki" Beta hansta hua mukh dikhao and I used to resound by smiling and kissing her. It was her belief that if one gets up smiling in the morning one passes the whole day smiling ie, one would hear good news during the day and remain merry etc. (generally). The next thing she would do was to make me sit on the bed on which I had been sleeping and raise my hands (as are raised in prayers) and would ask me to recite with her the following "Rubaai'' "Aye khaliq-e-har buland-o-pasti Shush cheez ataa bakunz-e-hasti ilmo amalo-faragh dasti eeman-o-amaan-o-tandurusti'' (The meaning of this rubaai in general terms is "God, who is the Lord of the high and the low and to whom alone we owe our existence, grant me six boons.

1. Learning (education) 2. Ability to act on it (later on, found that guru Maharaj Shri Swamiji, in one of his books "VEDIC UPDESH" had also written that if a person is illeterate and devoid of all learning and education, he should be deemed to be a beast rather than a human being. That is why perhaps in the said rubaye, the first boon asked is "llm" or vidya or learning. 3. Ability to spend freely 4. Dharma (ability to follow the right and the righteous path 5. Protection (of God) 6. Health.

She firmly believed that if a person is not able to act according to what has been prescribed in the scriptures, the case becomes like that of an ass on whose back is loaded a bundle of books but by this, neither can he become wise nor learned. She also used to recite a Persian couplet which meant the same thing.

"Chaar Paaye baro kitab-e-chand Na mautquid boo-ad na daanish mand"

After this "rubaayi" she would make me recite the following :

"Kya fayeda fikr-e-besh o kam se hoga hum kya hein jo koi kaam hum se hoga, jo kuchh hua, hua karam se tere jo kuchh hoga tere karam se hoga".

Reciting this "rubaayi" for years together, I find today that God has actually endowed me with all these six boons which I prayed for, under the able guidance of my mother.

She was a highly enlightened and a religious minded lady. Her entire mornings were devoted to Puja. Immediately after her "Rubaayi session" with me, she would take her rosary and count beads, remembering the name of God in the form of some "Mantra". Thereafter, she would recite "Vishnu Sahasra Naam", then Hanuman Chaalisa, the "Hanuman Ashtak", "Gajendra Moksh". These were rendered so audibly that I who then was just a cursory listener, learnt them all by heart and still retain much of them in my memory.

Incidentally, she had a very large shelf and on it were placed, a silver-framed picture of (with several hoods) Lord Vishnu, relaxing on a "Shesh Naag" with Shri "Laxmiji" sitting at his feet and a lotus branch coming out of his navel and from the lotus "Brahmaji" coming out with three faces.

By the side of this picture of Lord Vishnu were kept a huge volume of Tulsidas Ramayan a small paper back booklet containing Hanuman Chaalisa, the Hanuman ashtak and a Hanuman Aarti. Then a paper back of "Vishnu Sahasra Naam". These were rarely needed as she had long back learnt them by heart. Other items kept on that shelf were Agarbattis, Dhoop, Kapoor, a match box and their respective stands and a bottle of Gangajal. On the wall under the shelf, she had written the following in the same order I give below :

VISHNU BHAWAN
SUKH ASHRAM
SEWA KUNJ
DASI MOHINI

This was an annual feature since immediately before Diwali the white washers came and turned everything to white. So on Diwali day she again restored the status quo. She mixed a good quantity of Mercury oxide (Sindoor) with pure desi Ghee and made a paste and then wrote the above lines with that paste. These were written in such a bold type that none who came to our house could ever miss to notice them. Though not a regular poet, she composed several poems for different occasion e.g. for the birthdays of her children. One I remember she had composed on bari Didda's birthday. There is however no record of them.

In yester years, during marriage in Kashmiri Pandits, ladies used to sing in chorus, songs of joy written in Kashmiri language. Such songs were called "Vasan" Baua was an acknowledged expert in composing them. They generally used to start with "Heenze Patey". Gradually and gradually, this art has also gone into oblivion as rarely ladies of this generation know anything about them.

Another trait of her character was her out spoken ness. She was out spoken to the extent of being blunt and rude but never hesitated to call a spade a spade. I would just give one example. One fine morning the C.M.O. of the State Hospital, Rai Sahib Dr.Suraj Mal Sarin, had to come to our locality to see a patient. Since we had a very close relationship with him (family relations) he thought he might pay a courtesy call at our house. So he arrived. He was a man whose anger remained permanently stationed at the tip of his nose and in a second would come out in the form of a blast from his stick which he always carried; made of cane that stick had a handle, made of some animals horn and distinctly showed the face of some animal with two glistening eyes studded on it. I don't think they were diamonds but were definitely sparkling and dazzling.

Yet as soon as the doctor entered our houses, Bauji came out and told him "Doctor Sahib, by the grace of god we are all well. How come you are here in the early hours of this morning with a stethescope round your neck. This is a very bad omen. Please go and come some other time. The doctor was taken aback. When Bauji was born and the Pandits of those days prepared her horoscope they calculated and predicted that the cause of her death would be either "fire" or 'water'. Since she had known this in advance, she always remained careful and cautious. She never went to any river for a bath lest she be drowned. Even for occasions when brothers and sisters took a joint bath in rivers, as a ritual, she was never allowed to do so.

But, could these precautions ever change the 'Destiny', certainly not. She ultimately died due to fire and water.

HER LAST DAY

One day when she was cooking rice for the lunch, the boiling rice pot accidently fell from her hands, on her legs, creating blisters some as large as balloons and she suffered unbearable pains. She became bed-ridden. Doctors were immediately called and they attended on her but to no avail she told me "Beta, my time has come and I am going". She lay in a varandah on the ground floor. Since it was the summer season, the month being June (the hottest month of the year) Bhai Sahib had got "Khus" curtains fixed all round to make it cool and there was no dearth of servants who continuously sprinkled water on them. Over her head hanging from the ceiling was a large pully fan fitted with a string and pulled by a maid-servant, all the time. There were no desert coolers known in those days. Water was also sprinkled on the floor from time to time to make the room extra-cool. On the first floor, was her room, where she had kept her steel-trunk containing her clothes etc. Besides her clothes this trunk had a small brass "Sandookchi'' (a small box duly locked with its keys with her where she kept her money and other valuables) she asked someone to bring it to her. When brought, she opened it and took out a 5/- five rupees note and passed it on my hand and said "Beta, keep it, it would bring prosperity to you in later years". We brothers were sitting by her side.

She then pulled one of her hands and caught hold of my hand and placed it on her chest. By her other hand she pulled Bhai Sahib's hand and similarly placed it on her chest over my hand rather firmly. Everyone present there clearly got the message that she was entrusting me to the care of Bhai Sahib who had nodded in affirmation. The day thus passed and night came. This night she passed waking throughout and audibly chanting "Shri Ram", "Shri Ram". By the morning, she looked completely exhausted. She then had a little quantity of her morning tea and then became speech less. So 'Ram's name was the last word uttered by her in her consciousness. In this condition she started waiving her hand showing clearly her five fingures with a stress. Every body concluded that she was making a sign of "five" but none could say specifically what she meant. However, this mystery did not remain a mystery much longer.

The clock struck "five" and my most revered and respected mother breathed her last at that moment. Then only we understood that she actually wanted to indicate the actual time of her death.

As in Dhaulpur so in Datia too, there were hundreds of persons taught by Bhai Sahib who thronged her funeral procession and all her four sons were raising her bier on their shoulders. She was cremated at a spot near 'Karan Sagar' and thus this story also ended. The point to be noted here is that she also did not need any attedants to serve her and remained bed-ridden only for a day which I think is not a long period.

Once my barididda came from Jaora for delivery. Baua saw a dream in which a lady appeared before her and asked her "Mohiniji if you get a girl this time what name would you give her."

Without waiting for a second, Bauji replied, "What else? Rajjan's sister Tejan". And, after a couple of days Tejan was born, Rajjan was the name of my second eldest sister. After sometime she also came for delivery and Baua again saw a dream. In this dream she saw a strange house where she had gone. She used to do her "Pooja" facing east, but now, due to strange surroundings she failed to locate east. She went to the roof to see if the sun had come out and suddenly saw sun rising in the east and she shouted "Suraj nikal Aaya hai" and she sat for her pooja. in the morning when everybody else woke up, she announced in advance the birth of a son to Rajjan Didda and the child was infact named "Suraj".

Once both my brothers Bhai Peary and Bhai were studying together at the Banaras Hindu University and both had appeared for B.A. Exam and then had come back to Dhaulpur for the summer vacations and were awaiting their results. Bauji, one night saw in her dream a bird-cage having two compartments (like those kept for housing partriges where the male and the female bird are kept separately) and in each compartment an earthenlamp (a diva) was burning. When she got up in The morning she told all of us that both these boys would pass and that news should come together. Next day the result was announced and a student friend of my brothers sent the following telegram.

"MOHANANAND PASS". To save on words and money he had made Man Mohan and Anand Mohan into one word. But we all understood the meaning and rejoiced. Dozens of such meaningful dreams were seen by her but I do not wish to make this a "Book of Dreams" instead of just a biographical booklet.

Bauaji told me that I had sucked her milk for as long as four years since I was her last child. Strangely, she had that much of milk for me then. However I now believe, when I recollect those days that besides this milk, she had an enormous quantity of the 'milk of human kindness'. She had lot of compassion for the poor and a beggar rarely returned from our door empty-handed. On every Amavasya an old hag just appeared in our house and my mother always gave her a full "Thaali" filled with wheat flour, Dal, rice, some ghee, vegetable, rock salt its etc. It was known as 'Seedha'. This was the monthly ritual and continued till Bhaiji remained alive.

Bhaiji however did it in a different way. While returning from the school if he ever could meet some Sadhu he would bring him along with him and offer him food. He was a great believer in "Athiti

Satkar'' and relished his food most if taken with a guest. Those were the days of plenty and one could feed one's guests with ease. But now? somebody wrote "Pahle sochta tha ke koi mahman Aaye to Khana khaaon" "Aur ab soachta hoon ke mahman chala jaaye to khana khaaon".

People in general do not have much to offer now because of economic reasons mostly and partly due to changed attitudes. Bhaiji's routine as I already mentioned above was to prepare the morning tea for all of us. If he ever found that Bhai Sahib and Bhai Peary were still sleeping he would call them in a typical manner.

"Aiye Hari Mohan Lalji
Chaai tayyar hai and then "kuchh aise soye hein sone wale ke jagna sham tak dushvar hai"

This couplet was very frequently used and at once both the brothers used to rush out of their beds on hearing it. Here I may mention that one of his morning rituals was that he kept a piece of raw white arsenic (about one tola in weight as I now guess) and a slate. On this slate he would draw very thin line with arsenic and licked it. This practice perhaps was going on for some years during winters only.

He did it quite secretly in his room and none knew about it.

However, one day while he was in this process, I suddenly bumped in his room and saw everything. I asked Bhaiji what this was all about. He then explained to the inquisitive child that arsenic gave extra warmth to the body particularly in the old age and that is why throughout the winter he remained clad in a dhoti only, bare breasted, the rigours of cold not troubling him at all. Moreover, no mosquito even dared to attack him and if one ever dared, it died itself there and then. This piece of arsenic was always kept on a high machan in that room absolutely beyond my reach. Another peculiar thing about Bhaiji was that he never liked to sleep under a fan. He believed in perspiring as much as possible and claimed that with the perspiration all the pores of the body got opened up and all the stupid things of the body inside came out making the person absolutely light. In the mornings, he also took one raw egg with five almonds. He never made any dish out of it, as half-boiled, full boiled etc. In later years of his life, he had started suffering from acute constipation and so used an enema everyday. This practice went on for many years till one day, a friend of Bhai Sahib, Sardar Tara Charan Mukherji came to our house for a chat with Bhai Sahib. He was a Homeopath and also distributed free medicines like Bhai Sahib and was Bhai Sahib's guru in homeopathy. Bhaiji happened to buttin and asked Tara Charan to cure his constipation if he claimed to be a doctor. He asked me to come to his house to fetch the required medicine. I shall remember, he prescribed "Veratrum Album ''6x" 4 doses per day. Bhaiji took that medicine for hardly three-four days and his chronic constipation had gone for ever.

Till death he never touched that nasty enema. Bhaiji sometimes played cards as well but only with his children and one game only "kot-peace". And, while playing he used to give subtle signals to his partner what to move next. For example, if he wanted his partner to move a spade (Hukum) he would recite the following couplet :-

"Kya hukum Shahnsha koi talwar na bandhe sub orhni orhen koi dastar na bandhe"

("dastar" means turban)

If he wanted a heart to be moved he would recite some other couplet in which the word 'Dil' occurred. For clubs (chiri) he would say "Kuchh chirian" "virian" "udao". It was all fun and nothing else and we all enjoyed the game. Bhaiji never played cards with stake or with any out sider.

WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

Mother always taught me to say "Jai Ganpat Ganeshji Maharaj and Sukh Sant to savey sant" while wearing new clothes whether it be shirt a pyjama or even a vest. Thereafter, she would say "Pahanna Naseeb ho". She also firmly believed in an old saying "kapra pehne teen var, Budh, Brishpati, Shukar vaar, Harey Khange Aitwar". This meant that new clothes should be worn on three days of the week only on wednesdays, thursdays and fridays. However, in an emergency one could wear it on sunday as well. In course of time this became a life long habit and I do it till today.

Another thing Baua taught me was that if one went out, more particularly out of town, one should always say "Sada Bhawani Dahini, Sun Mukh Rahein Ganesh Panch Dev Raksha Karen, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh "Gauri Putra Ganesh". Fortunately this too is being continued in my family even now.

Bauaji then taught me how to start our meals. As soon as I got my "thaali" before me she would ask me to close my eyes for a moment and try to see vishnu bhagwan and then say "Bhagwan prem ka bhog lagaao" and then start eating the stuff as "Prasad". After I finished my meals she would again ask me to say "Om tatsat Brahma Param Astu" I did not learn the exact meaning of these Sanskrit words. Some Sanskrit knowing person would perhaps translate it.

Once I started seeing some horrible dreams and shrieked at night. Baua then advised me to wash my hands and feet regularly before going to bed and recite the following before sleeping :-

Ahilya, Dropdi Tara, Sita, Mandodari thatha Panch Kanya Sumitrain dusht swapnum Niwaraye.

Indeed for many night thereafter I did not see any disquieting and fearful dreams.

Several other couplets, perhaps composed by Bhaiji, were also spoken by my elders and a few of them I reproduce below. one of them, it appears, was on my mother who as usual might have left the house after some quarrel with Bhaiji to stay in her "Maika" and father must have sent a letter asking her to come back, but, without any response. Another one perhaps related to Bhaiji himself who had probably appeared for his M.A. (Prev) examination and was expecting his result :-

"Mudaam(A) aish-o-tarab(B) mein guzra, nishat-e-kul(C) tha shabab aadha magar hum dekhte hain usko to tha faqat ek wo khwab(H) aadha jo nisf zakhme alam(D) se khoon hai aur nisf biryaan(E) hai soz(F)-e-gham se wo meray di ka-dada(G) hai jisme sharab aadhi kabab aadha huuaye hein wo inteharn mein shamil khuda ne chaha to pass honge sanad milegi zaroor unko ata bhi hoga khitab aadha wo hein sitamgar wo must paima (habit) wafa ki khoobi nahin hai unmein khutoot lakhon hi unko bheje na denge par-ve-Jawab adha".

(A) Always (B) peace and happiness (C) complete happiness (D) sorrow, gried (E) roasted (F) burnt (G) cup (H) Dream # Youth.

Subsequently, one day when I asked Bauaji what was meant by half degree, she told me that in those days a candidate, after passing the previous exam also was awarded some degree or certificate. I can't however explain clearly in details what she said because I myself did not understand it.

SELF

I was born on the 4th July 1921 at the then “Lady Hardings Hospital” in Dhaulpur. The two lady doctors who delivered me were lady doctor Parkinson and lady doctor Rudderford. When I was born I also had six fingers in both hands exactly as Baua had and on seeing them, both the doctors exclaimed “Bara khandani hai bachcha”. These doctors were missionaries and served the hospital with dedication. Later on I grew a black mole on the left side of my chin exactly at the same spot Baua had however, due to daily shaving and cutting it daily during shaves made it disappear. Traces are however still visible. So far as these six fingers are concerned, purity of blood, inheritance and genes are to be emphasized. I inherited them from Baua, Vishnu (Bhai Sahib's eldest son) had these and one son of Rajjan didda had them. But, by the time Indu was born, some impurity in blood had taken place. Those Sheopuriswhere I was married were not supposed to be of that pure Aryan blood for which Baua her whole life, hankered after. I still remember” a proposal for Bhai Sahib's marriage came from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's family but Baua rejected it straight away without even giving a thought to it remarking “Kam Zaat Kat hein”.

Meaning they have no pure blood. I am sure had she been alive she would not have permitted this marriage. The result was that while Indu also had six fingers she has them only in one hand. For inheritance, I may also add here the Bhaiji had a mole on his nape, and Bhai Pearey got one at the same place.

I was born on the 4th of July 1921. Before my birth Baua had another son. The notable feature about him was that he was born on the "Ram Navami" day and exactly at the time Shri Ram was born- when bells were ringing in all the Rama temples of the country and conch shells were hailing his arrival. Mother told me that the Pandits who drew his horoscope had predicted that he would make his father, a Rajah having an elephant with a silver howdah but the chances of his survival were remote. This prediction came out absolutely true as the boy actually died in his infancy. She wept bitterly and was not prepared to be consoled in any way. Till one day, when Bhaiji, while returning from the school, brought a Sadhu along with him to feed as was his old habit. This Sadhu was known as "Doodha Dhari Baba" who survived only on milk. He did not eat anything else. Father asked Bauaji to bring a glass of milk for the guest. She complied. But when she approached him with milk, tears were flowing clearly from her eyes. The Baba saw and enquired the reason. Baua replied, "Baba mera hansta khelta beta chala gaya". Baba at once shouted "No, he has not gone. He is just playing outside under that tree which was outside our house. He would come back. Why worry" and then drank that glass of milk. My mother first treated it as an empty consolation to pacify her since she had almost passed the normal age of delivering children. But, mysterious are the ways of Destiny. After some time mother suddenly found her self in the family day. And thus, I was born, perhaps, because it was a boon from Doodhari Baba, I also loved milk since birth and love it still till today. I sucked, my mother's milk till I was four years old and surprisingly, she had it for me till then.

I have no audacity to compare myself with the mythological Abhi-manyu who had learnt the art of penetrating a "Chakravyu" while he was still in his mothers womb, but quite remotely and yet a near similar to it, I seem to have also behaved as I learnt from Bauji later on. Since the day I was born, I was learning from Bauji "Ram" and "Ram" and had fully understood that 'Ram' was the name of God who was responsible for our birth and death. So even when I was still sucking my mother's milk, I would sit in a secluded corner and would say "Hey Ram main mer jaon". I would repeat it many-many times at a stretch quite audibly. I simply could not know why! being an infant. Perhaps, I did not desire to come back to this Earth or was perhaps dragged by some force against my will. That was particularly strange since I was excessively loved by my parents and I also loved them as children, normally do. I can not imagine of any discomforts or any other possible reason on earth to beg for my death at that tender age. Surely inconceivable but afact. Here it was what people say "fact is stranger than fiction".

One day, however, my mother heard me doing this. (after all, how long a child could hide it from a mother) She atonce came running to me and admonished me severely, reminding me tearfully how she had wept for my birth etc. etc. She even slapped me and I cried a lot but since then I dared not repeat it for months together. All this was told to me by Baua herself one day after several years. But, here, I must confess, my inner-self continued to have that urge and though I hid it for a short time only, my desire to die remained alive for a long time. It became a habit with me all my childhood and I simply loathed this world. As such this is an honest confession. When I grew a little older, I started going to a 'Rama temple' situated nearby and almost daily, attending the evening aarti, performed there, some time even beating the ''ghanta'' or playing at the large gong and other instruments which formed part of the "Aarti'' when I grew still older and was able to go freely out of the house, I started going to a renowned saint "Baba Madhavanand" who resided about two miles from my residence on way to river chambal. He was a great Yogi a "Puran Bhaght" of Lord Hanuman. He was a "Siddh Purush" as we call in religious parlance. He could predict anything and everything. He was a professed "Raj Yogi" i.e. living like a king. He wore a silken banyan and had a hookah with a silver nozzle, two cars with drivers, an army of disciples who also worked as his servants. Every thing had been donated to him by his wealthy admirers. They came from big cities like. Bombay and Calcutta etc. and asked for "numbers" on which they could invest money. That game was called "Satta" and when he fore told them about the coming number, they earned thousands and then brought expensive gifts to please him.

He used to sit on an easy chair and on both the sides were spread "straw Chataies" on the floor where we sat. Many times I used to sit near his feet and as such got opportunities to press them. I feel he had started liking me. In course of time this became a regular feature. The time had now come for us to prepare and go for the matriculation examination. My weekest subject was Maths for which I had prepared only very selective questions. Gwalior was our centre and thousands of candidates had come for the purpose. After the Maths paper when I came out of the hall, I was crest fallen. I had solved one question wrong. Every question was of seven marks and my four right questions could secure me twenty eight marks only (7x4). I knew there was no way I could pass. Lots of depressing thoughts shot my mind. At this moment, a short-statured person who looked like a muslim beggar bare-breasted, wearing a black short beard and a dirty looking Tahband (lungi) was seen, tearing the crowd apart with his hands and frantically passing by me. As soon as his face came near my ear he said in a whispering tone, "Tu pass ho jaayega" and in flick of a second even before I could think, he disappeared I could not even react.

If he had stayed even for a minute, I could have told him that it was impossible but this angel actually disappeared, not waiting at all for my reaction. But this incident further perplexed me and left me bewildered. I knew he had not come to beg for any thing as I saw him not begging before anyother student either. His personality however gave me an inkling of "Babboo Mian" as had been described to me by Baua many years back. Any way, I came back to Dhaulpur. Next evening I went to Baba Madhavanand's ashram and as I sat at his feet. Baba atonce knew there was something wrong as I did not have that disposition on my face as I always used to have. He broke his silence by asking me what was the matter. This was enough to make me cry like a child. I could just tell him that I had spoiled my math's paper and would fail. He asked me not to worry and appear next year. I then told him of my special circumstances, that I had already lost my father a few months earlier and that I had become a burden on my brothers who may not even like to give me further education on seeing my result. I then resumed my crying. He then shouted at me "Saley meri poonji Kharch karwayaga? "Dont cry" and atonce fell into a trance. After about two or three minutes, he opened his eyes and said "don't worry" I will put red chilli powder in your examiner's eyes and even his fore fathers could not fail you and with all the force at his command, he shouted, "you shalt go to the college next year after these holidays. He further said that in this process nine more students would have to be passed. So what? Let them also pass although my prime concern is you. No power on earth can stop it" At this moment

I felt really consoled.

I stopped weeping, I was convinced that Baba never told a lie as his predictions of the past had never gone wrong. I returned home reassured and in the mind promising to offer a 'Prasad' of 5 seers of laddoos at his feet if I actually passed. Now, look at the miracle. Barely four or five days after this meeting, we all saw in the "Hindustan Times" a report which said that the Ajmer 'Board had an urgent meeting at Ajmer in which cognisance was taken of the "Graph question" in the maths paper which was found to be out of course and thus those students who attempted it had been wrongly victimised. It was therefore decided that all of them would be given five grace marks. Our maths teacher, Shri Sardar Singh Gupta (He taught both Science and Maths, immediately called all the examinees to the school to find out how many of them had attempted the 'graph question'. The enquiry revealed ten in all and I was one of them. With five grace marks my tally come to 'thirty three' - pass percentage. How Baba's prophecy came out true is to an ordinary mind unbelievable. A few days later, the result was out and my Roll No. was there Baua's happiness could not be measured.

She had all along been praying and praying. Tears of sorrow had turned to tears of joy. Now, as promised by me I went to the market and bought five seers of fresh laddoos (of Motichur) in a basket tied to my cycle carrier and proceded straight to Baba's ashram. Imagine, what a silly idea came to my mind, on the way. I imagined that there would be hardly twenty thirty people there while the laddoos were more than hundred but then, on further consideration, I decided that the undistributed "Prasad" would be brought home and eaten there. But yet again I would repeat that mysterious are the ways of God" when I offered the basket to him, he was in a smiling mood and immediately started distributing one laddoo each, to all those present only God knows from where so many people poured in. After finishing the distribution Baba said (looking in my eyes) "Aik laddoo tere liye chhor diya hai, Khaale". I was mesmerised what ever you may say, but as they say, I was "eating dust". After the summer vacations, I joined the "Radha Swami" educational Institute in a college - "Dayal Bagh" as it was then called and continued further studies at Dayal Bagh. In the meantime I came under the shadow of my own guru Shri Swamiji Maharaj and forgot almost all about "Baba Madhavanand. In fact, I was only his admirer, not a desciple. He had not given me any "Mantra" or taught anything about worship meditation etc. So I had no right to call him a Guru. But there is absolutely no doubt that he was indeed a great saint. He had very long eye-brows which almost covered his eyes and people of the older generation frequently remarked that they had not noticed any change in him for the last forty fifty years since they had been seeing him. Some felt that he was beyond hundred years.

One more instance of his powers here, I think, would not be out of place. One of my maternal uncles, Pt.Nand Lal Tikku (fondly addressed as Nandoo Bhai) had been employed in the Railways and was perhaps posted at Bombay. After years of life long permanent service, God knows what happened, he was sacked. He came down to Agra to reside in his ancestral house in Kucha Sadhu Ram Phullati Bazar along with his wife and children searching for a job.

Those were the days of a big slump in the country. While the colleges and universities continued to churnout graduates, they had no jobs and many graduates were seen squatting on road-sides, with brushes and shoe polishes, trying to earn their living by polishing shoes. They had cloth banners on their back on which was inscribed "B.A. Boot Polish" those were the times when natural calamities also overtook India. The most infamous famine of Bengal took place and the then British Secretary of State had the audacity to announce that it was an "Act of God" and no human being could help. Thousands died of starvation. Dibrugarh was rocked by a devastating earth quake which left thousands dead and several other thousands shelter less. In such circumstance how could an old man like Nandu Bhai find a job. It was nothing short of a miracle that he got one and that too, sitting at his house only.

He was frantically trying to find some job unsuccessfully. One day he dropped at Dhaulpur to meet Baba Madhavanand if he could help him. Early in the morning he took me along to his "Bagicha" as it was called. When we reached there Baba was having some shooting practice with his shot gun shooting some earthen cups (Kullars). When we came close to him I introduced Nandoo Bhai to him and the he started telling his tale of woe. Then Baba asked him since when was he unemployed "For the last two years" replied Nandu Bhai. "Then wait for two years more". We came back and he returned to Agra. When I next went to Agra with Baua, I found that Nandu Bhai had taken a big calender, and was crossing with red, each date as soon as it passed and this went or for two years. The day two years were over, our family Guru Pt. Omkar Nath who used to reside in 'Sheetala Gali', just at a stone's throw distance from kucha Sadhu Ram, came to Nandu Bahi early in the morning and told him that Sri Kailash Narayan Haksar (of Gwalior)was setting up a factory in Sri Nagar, Kashmir to be run by his son-in-law (perhaps some Avtar Kishan wattal, I am not quite sure of the name). This much however I clearly remember, that the mill was to be known as 'Sri Karan Singh' woollen mills, Kashmir. "Guruji told Nandu Bhai that Wattal was in need of a reliable person to work as an accountant and handle all the cash of the mill and that he had suggested his name to wattal with full confidence. Wattal agreed and so if he agreed his salary will be paid from that day itself. Now meet Wattal, take some money from him as an advance for your journey expense etc. and move atonce to Kashmir''. What more could Nandu Bhai aspire for at that moment. Destiny smiled on him but only after exactly two years as predicted.

Awakening the kundalini.

I have heard many people say, and I can also vouch safe for them that there is an imaginary serpent vein (Kundalini) in every human being seated and lying dormant near the anus, curled and making two and half inch but when a person practises the art of waking it according to the guidance under a competent Guru it starts moving to other parts of the body and finally goes to the head and revolves round the skull (Brahmand) and then comes back to her original place. This happened with me also once when I was trying to wake her up. Several times I felt her moving on my back and hands chest but it was only once that it shot up to the head. The moment it struck thus I felt a sudden rumbling and fainted. There after a severe head ache followed all this happened in Jammu when I was staying with Gyani my younger son. Since I was not taught this science by a competent guru and had only learnt it through some literature sent to me by Sagar,avery good Guru Bhai, I practised for several months and then found it was moving allright. It had become a daily ritual for me. One day however, while I was practising it, Adya, Gyani's elder daughter suddenly walked in my room and sat on my lap at that moment it was passing through my hand and I ran this active and supposedly charged handover her head and back. I was still in meditation she got up kissed me and said "Baba main ja rahi hoon" I did not speak but only nodded. After caressing her thus I suddenly felt as if I had given her every thing I had. I still do not know what I had and what I had given except only a very strong feeling that one day this girl would get name, fame, reputation and honour in addition to a devotional mind', I shall not be alive to see that day but others may see it. It is my;sincere prayer also that my wish and hope may prove correct. I still can't make out whether her sudden arrival in my room, sitting in my lap and then immediately leaving me after a minute was predestined or preordained or purely accidental. Time alone would make it clear, I wish her all the best. She is already showing signs of brightness and intelligence at even this tiny age and so my confidence in her is all the more strengthened.

Then I realised that it could lead to dangerous consequences if I continued the practice and so I stopped it altogether I further realised that one must have a competent guru to guide. There are specific mantras and "Shlokas" to take it up to "Brahmand" and also for bringing it down to its resting place. Since my knowledge of Sanskrit was 'nil' I could not even pronounce the words correctly or even understand their meaning, it turned out to be a futile exercise. I must make it clear that while I was in that process I did feel completely elated "Param Anand" though partially. It can't be described. I am however convinced of the theory that if it is fully woken up one could see every thing in meditation and predict very many things as done by Baba Madavanand Both, he and my guru, Shri Swamiji maharaj had it woken, the only difference being that while the former was a complete "Sidhi Purush" the latter was the very incarnation of Lord 'Shiva' He could predict, and he did, several times events which were to take place after thirty years He did it with me when I was promoted from the seventh class to the eight I was faced with a problem. I had to exercise an option whether to go for 'Science' or continue with 'Arts' Bhai Pearey discussed with Bhaiji and they both agreed that with 'Arts' there was no career but Science had far better prospects so I was made to take 'Science'. In those day in our school Science meant two subjects only - Physics and Chemistry and had both of "Theory" and "Practical".

One day, in the "Practical class" my science teacher, Shri Serdar Singh Gupta was giving a demonstration. He lighted a candle and then showed to the students that the candle had thrown up two images while one was called the "real image" the other was called the "virtual" image. By "virtual" I thought it was the false image I became excited by learning this new word and I atonce wanted to use this new word. I therefore wrote to Bhai Sahib in Datia, a letter in which I wrote that when he was in Dhaulpur last time he had promised to send me his old bicycle as he had bought a new one. So I wrote "You had promised me a cycle but have not sent it yet. Please remember that I want a real cycle and not a virtual one. I thought Bhaiji would love to read this new word and would give a pat on my back for it. So I took the letter to him for perusal. I was feeling really elated at that moment of time. But, much to my chagrin, Bhaiji atonce cut off the entire sentence and dictated another one instead. I had clearly seen a glimpse of a smile and a frown on his face. Surprisingly in his dictated sentence he also used the same new word but had added "ly" also, making it "virtually" I do not remember the sentence now but I had concluded that he wanted to teach me how this word is used correctly. Bhai Sahib sent the cycle in a few days and I started using it. For long, my feet did not touch it's pedals if I sat on the saddle and so I rode it cross legged, in a standing position and successfully did all the errands on it, which included bringing beetle -leaves for Bhai Pearey and Bauaji, cigarettes for Bhai Sahib and such other things. One day, when I had gone to buy 'Pan' I suddenly saw Baba Madhavanand's car grinding to a halt right in front of the shop. I went to touch his feet and he took out a 'Paisa' from his pocket and gave it to me and then flew away, in a moment. I was a fool. I could not think that it had some deeper meaning I went to the chat wela and took sixteen "golgappas' which one paisa could buy. Much later, I heard from some elders that that coin should have been preserved and it would have ensured the possessor that he could never starve for money and would have it in abundance.

THE TILAK OF BLOOD

My sacred thread ceremony was performed along with the marriage of Rajjan didda when I was only seven years old. So I was not even seven years old when the following incident took place. Our Land-lord, Kanwar Chettar Singh ordered for a goat's sacrifice one day (I donot remember the particular occasion). About fifteen to twenty people gathered there and I was one of them. One Shri Narsingh Pal Singh had the sword. As soon as he spoke words 'Bolo Kali Mai ki Jai' in unison with all those present and simultaneously struck the goats neck, the goat was gone. He then took a little of its blood on his left palm and with his right hand started putting "Tilaks" on the foreheads of all.

It was now that something unusual happened. As soon as Shri Narsing Pal Singh applied the tilak on my fore-head, I felt a special kind of a shrill or thrill whatever you may like to call it and my whole body felt some.sort of vibrations which I am unable to describe. It appeared Kali Mai had Herself come to bless me. However, all the vibrations and shrills subsided some time after and every thing became normal I was too young to realise anything. However, after several years, when Maharaj]i gave me a Saraswati "Mantra'' to recite so that I may get first division in every class that this mystery un-folded and realisation dawned on me. How? I was counting beads day and night of that 'Mantra' most enthusiastically because of Maharajji's assurance that by doing so I would top the list of successful candidates each year. Till then I had not even visited the Kali Temple which was not far from my house. However "Mahakali'' appeared before me in a dream I started reciting that "Mantra" before her. So with a twisted finger right at my lips SHE said, "This is not my "Mantra'' you do mine".

When I replied that I did not know Her Mantra, she started speaking Her Mantra repeatedly till I learnt by heart. She then disappeared and the dream ended. I got up immediately and noted it down on a piece of paper in 'urdu'. It was morning already and I took it to Maharajji and narrated to him all that had happened. I have however given a detailed account of this incident and would like my readers to read the article entitled "End of Era" in the "Swami Smriti Granth". These were 'summer' vacations and I was in Datia those days.

For those who may not be able to have access to that "Granth" I enclose a copy of that article with this book as well. From this incident, however, I could conclude that "Kali Mai'' had taken me under "Her" Shadow that very day when blood in her name was applied on my four-head. I had now a strong feeling that Mai must have actually entered my body and caused those unique vibrations. I have however nothing to corroborate this fact, although it is crystal clear that she did not desire that I should worship anyother god except her. And since then I have been doing so.

Children of tomorrow would perhaps like to know what a mantra is after all since that generation would, I surnise, be more anglicised and westernised because of the ever growing western influence. Even now I observe that they have long started greeting each other with the words "Hai, Hello" and good morning instead of our traditional "Namaskars" and "jai ramji ki" etc. which were in vogue for the past many centuries in our country. Mantra generally is a combination of certain "cryptic sanskrit words" as prescribed by sages and are contained in the relevant scriptures. Some are however of one such word only and are called "Ek Aksharya Mantra" counting them on beads after the devotee has got it from a competent guru. Reading it from a book and then start counting it would not yield the desired results. This was explained to me by Maharajji. He further clarified that in 99.9 cases out of 100, this is given by the guru. However, in one case out of several thousands the "Deity" herself/ himself gives this to the devotee as fortunately happened in my case. If one goes on counting it regularly with complete faith devotion and concentration this Mantra becomes "Siddh" and could then grant any boon the devotee desired. For example if the devotee is worshipping goddess "Saraswati" he is definitely likely to get laurels in knowledge, learning poetry etc. and if he is worshipping "Lakshmi" he would become wealthy. Each goddess is worshipped for a specific purpose. There are "Mantras" for conquering enemies, for winning court cases etc. etc.

I may also add here that this is called "SHAKTI SADHANA" Shakti is Devi. But there are two path or 'Margs' in this Sadhna. One is the Gian Marg and the other is 'Bhakti Marg'. In the former, the devotee tries to attain spiritual powers himself in order to perform miracles to achieve his aims and objects. This is also called the "Marg" of the baby monkey. It clings on to its mother while she is jumping from one tree to another and survives because of its own ef fort. The moment its grip loosens, it falls and dies. In the other case which is known as the kitten's marg, the kitten has not to make any effort for its survival. If its life would seem to be in danger the mother herself would hold it in her mouth and take it to some other safer place. The kitten has not to make any effort whatsoever. It should not be forgotten however that both these "margs" lead to the same "goal" and none is superior or inferior to the other.

In this context Maharajji once described the following. The weather was extremely hot and a traveller who was going through a secluded place felt some unbearable thirst. He located a well near by but since he had no string or a pitcher, it was impossible for him to fetch water from that wall. He therefore sat calmly with closed eyes and started meditating. He was a devotee of the "Bhagti Marg". In the meantime another person came there. He was also very thirsty but he too did not have the means to draw water. He sat on the well itself and went into meditation. By and by the water level started coming up and up. when the well was upto the brink, he drank water with hands, quenched his thirst and went away. He belonged to the "Gian Marg" which is also known as the marg of "Siddhi". With his own efforts and powers he had attained his goal. After he had gone, the former opened his eyes and found to his astonishment that water of the well was within his reach. He also drank with his hands to his heart's content and left for his onward journey. Thus, both achieved their goal, the former due to his own effort and the latter due to his "Mother's" kindness.

Maharajji, however once told me that he had spent fifty years in this research and on the basis of his own experience, he found the kitten's marg better than the other. According to him, in the other marg there were more chances of failure because man after all is a human being and thus is liable to commit some mistake which could lead to disastrous results. This Shakti Sadhana is also called "Tantrik Sadhana" because everything there is based on "Tantra Shastras". Thus "Tantrik" are universally condemned these days because they have started misusing powers their sadhna for evil designs. There is nothing wrong however in the science as such which also leads to spiritualism of the highest order. To attack somebody through this learning is called "Prayog" Maharajji always warned his disciples never to do it and from "Peetambra Peeth" particularly never allowed anybody to do so.

One day while I was in Datia, I saw Maharajji in a dream. Nearby was lying a stool and on the table-cloth of that stool was lying a piece of silver in a triangular form and at each corner was inscribed some cryptic sanskrit word. When I started at it, Maharajji asked me to wear it. The dream ended. In the morning I went to Peetambra Peeth and found everything about it and also the name of the silver smith who would make it for me. If somebody is interested in knowing about this in details, he should read "chid vilas" a book in sanskrit with its para by para translation in english by Dr. Yogesh Mishra. Since then I have always been wearing it along with a "Rudraksh" which was long back given to me by somebody to ward off any heart attack. Efficacy of this "Rudraksh" has been twice tested since I have suffered two massive heart attacks and still survived.

I was working as an Administrative officer in the development department of Delhi Administration known as I.A.D.P. (Intensive Agriculture Development Programme). Besides me, there were the Agriculture officer (Shri Sultan Singh I) the Seed Development Officer (Sultan Singh II) an Agronomist (Shri Pali Singh) A Fertiliser Officer, Mr.Dixit, Another officer Shri Agya Singh and a fleet of jeeps and trucks. An "Applied Nutrition Programme was also run by this dept. All the four community Development Blocks with four Block Development officers (BD0s) were also under this Deptt. I had been declared as "Head of Deptt., Drawing and Disbursing Officer". All payments of salaries etc. were made by me. I had an annual budget of a little over fifty lakhs to spend. I have given the names of these officers purposely as would be clear later on. One night during those days I saw a dream in which I saw I was standing in a compound enclosed on all sides by very high walls. There was however one opening a round "Mori" as are generally made for draining rain water. Suddenly I saw a devil looking person standing before me with a sword in his hand just ready to strike at me.

As soon as he advanced nearer with his evil intention, I saw 'Kali Mai' rushed out from the right side of my right shoulder and tried to pounce on him with a sword also in her hand. This devil retreated a few steps as also 'Maa'. He made one more attempt paced forward to strike but 'Maa' again immediately paced forward to strike at him. He then asked, 'Maa' in rather subbued tone "To mein jaoon and 'Mai' nodded. He then atonce changed his form into a mangoose and ran out of the compound through that opening mentioned above. The dream ended and in the morning I told Girija (my wife) What all had happened. I told her that some misfortune was to befall on me but 'Maa' had saved me but what that misfortune could be and in what form, I could not gauge. Apparently, there was nothing wrong everything was normal. So in the normal way I left for my office. Like me, the other officers had also telephones at their tables. While my office was located at Khyber Pas, the officer of the development commissioner the Assistant Development Commissioner etc. were located at 'Lancer's Road' one Sardar Iqbal Singh was the DC. and R.N.Puri was the Assistant Development Commissioner (Adm). There was another Assistant Development commissioner (Accounts) Mr.Malhan. They were my bosses. So in the morning while I was checking the office cash book and counting the cash in the 'Safe' to see that the balance shown in the safe, tallied with that shown in the cash book, I received a phone call from Shri Puri. When I picked up the phone and said "Hello' Puri replied "Mr.Zutshi, I am Puri speaking. Please ask Dixit to ring me up as I am not getting his no." I stood up. In the adjoining room, was Mr.Dixit and I gave him Puri's message. I came back to my seat and re-started checking its entries. Suddenly I received another call from Mr.Puri, asking me to tell Sultan Singh I to ring him up (there were two Sultan Singh in my office so they were called I & II). After all he was my boss and I was supposed to comply with his orders, I did unfortunately however (note the coincidence my peon was also absent that day). I restarted my work but no sooner than I did, again there was a call from Puri ordering me to ask S.Agya Singh to ring him up as he was not getting him on his phone directly. This became the last straw on the back of the provertrial camel. There was a sudden rush of blood towards my head I flared. I shouted "Mr.Puri, what do you think I am here for. Am I a peon". No I am an officer and would not go to Agya Singh. He replied "Mr.Zutshi, you will have to go two hundred times if I order you, do you understand? My reply was "Mr.Puri, do not shout. I can shout louder, but the fact is that while you say 200 times, my reply is "Not even once" He then said, "Do you know the consequences of this disobedience I said, "I do not need to know. Do whatever you like but remember that these orders shall never be complied with. I was shouting at the pitch of my voice and so some officers of my Accounts Deptt. which was adjacent to my room came out to see what was exactly happening. The news spread like wild fire and the entire office became aware of the quarrels I had with Puri. Some commented that my suspension" from service was imminent. Subsequently it transpired that Puri, with the approval of the Dev. Commissioner sent a letter to the Chief Secretary to suspend me.It was not within the competence of the Development Commissioner to suspend me otherwise I would have been suspended that very moment. My well wishers at Lancer Road were briefing me about the developments and I had come to know that a letter had already been sent to the Chief Secretary (then Sri S.C. Verma I.A.S. who after retirement joined the B.J.P. He was an officer from M.P.) I was naturally worried although momentarily. By this time, it was lunch time and I drove down my scooter home for lunch. The first thing I did here was to bow before the image of 'Mai' telling Her what was to happen had happened and now it was for Her to deal with the situation. To Girija, I simply said that our worry would pass shortly since last night's dream Confirmed that 'maa' had saved me. I still remember, before mai's portrait I had shed a few tears as well while praying. How quickly 'maa' acted cannot just be described. Bracing to face the 'consequences' I returned to office after lunch. As soon as I reached the office the first thing I heard was that the chief secretary had issued orders transferring Puri from the Development Deptt. Not only that, the order said that he should hand over charge by the same evening and leave that Deptt. Another officer, by the name of one K.B.Shukla, took over. Maa had specially sent him to help me because the moment he took over, the same evening he called for me when I went to Lancer Road to meet him, he told me to forget all that had happened with Puri. Before leaving, Puri did one more damaging thing. We used to receive under the "Applied Nutrition Programme" White imported jeeps through M/s Mahendra & Mahendra of Bombay. To collect one such jeep Formal permission of the Lt.Governor was required to perform this "extra jurisdictional journey" and it had also been obtained for me and a driver. But after this incident, he wrote a note to the Development Commissioner that Mr.Zutshi is doing important work and cannot be spared to go to Bombay and so, another officer, be deputed for this purpose DC. agreed and thus my plan to go to Datia on my way back from Bombay and offer some 'Alphonso' mangoes to Maharajji shattered. Although I had been feeling very excited, what could I do! Sanction of the Lt.Governor was also being obtained to enable Gupta to perform this extra jurisdictional journey. Now see, what happens. Mr.Gupta sent an application from his house that since he was confined to bed with high fever, he could not attend the office. He went on extending his leave on the same ground although he knew that he was being deputed to go to Bombay. Here, Mahindras were sending telegrams after telegrams for immediately taking the delivery of the jeep. The Development Commissioner decided that Mr.Zutshi could not be expected to be so busy that he could not proceed to Bombay alongwith a driver Balister Singh. At Mahindras place, I was introduced to Shri Keshub Mahindra the chairman of Mahindra's what a coincidence? While I am writing this I have today's copy of the 'Indian Express' in which his photograph along withinterview has been published. Memories of my chat with him and his cheerful disposition have atonce come to my mind.

I was now sailing smoothly away from harm's way and with mangoes with me I landed at Datia. Maharajji was standing in front of the room where "Yantra" Pooja is held. As soon as I entered and greeted him with "Namo Narain" he only nodded his head and waved his right hand briskly in the air in the manner of striking at somebody's neck to behead him writh a naked sword, signifying the end of the 'evil' I replied quietly that I had done nothing except to pray. He then said "Prakashji jisko maa bulaye usay duniya mein koi rok sakta hai? Certainly not". All hurdles were cleared automatically and I offered some mangoes to him. He was pleased. I returned to Delhi and went to the office with the new white jeep only to discover that Gupta attended office only when I had returned to Delhi not a day before. I had not seen Bombay till then and an old friend Kamal Singh made it possible. The shrine of 'Haji Ali' and the famous Aquarium etc. were visited. Another city from where we received jeeps was Calcutta I had not seen Calcutta either. A desire therefore suddenly cropped up in my mind to go there also. The main reason was that there was an ancient Kali Temple and I personally wanted to have a Darshan but I was also convinced that unless SHE calls me I could not go, I therefore waited for Her call How can I ever forget Maa's kindness and Her love. Just after four weeks a telegram was received from Calcutta for the collection of another jeep. Who else could go? The Development Commissioner wrote on the telegram itself that Mr.Zutshi be deputed and I went to Calcutta. I collected the jeep and then went to 'Kali Ghat' for Maa's darshan and to pay obeisance. On my way back to Delhi I broke my journey at Kanpur which was on the road route and where my parents-in-law had been staying with their younger son Jeewan. My mother-in-law accompanied me in the jeep to Delhi to meet her daughter, Girija. maharaji had told me once that while we could worship any God and Goddess that they are all equal but if you worship Him in the form of a 'Mother it becomes far better. None loves us more and none can claim of loving us more than a mother. She becomes kind to Her devotees (children) earlier than any other God. I realised it once more at this time when SHE called me atonce to fulfil my desire. Another trip to Bombay to collect one more jeep and another opportunity to visit Datia to have Mahrajji's darshan. This time maharajji asked me as to how had I come and when I replied "by car" he immediately made a comment "To kaar wala to kabhi bekaar nahin reh sakta''. His words have come true, I can't describe. Whenever I go there a car is at my disposal. All my children have cars. Even in Datia I get a friend's car almost always. If I am in Delhi, this friend's car would come to Delhi to take me to Datia, stopping in the way at Dhaulpur to enable me to have Kali Maa's Darshan. Many times I have gone to Datia by road only. These were my guru's words and how could they ever prove wrong!

After some days I was promoted as Sales Tax officer and transferred from the Development Deptt. There after undergoing the prescribed training under an experienced S.T.O., I took independent charge of a ward. The whole of Delhi had been divided in forty sales tax wards. Here I had hardly worked for a fortnight when the home ministry issued orders for my transfer as an Administrative Officer at the Mental Hospital at Shahdara on the other side of river jamuna. I was shocked. People started saying that I might have started making money by receiving illegal gratifications. Some said something else. This post had in fact 'fringe' benefits. For example if you bought some article from a dealer of your own ward chances were that he would not charge you anything or if you brought some article from a dealer of some other ward and if he knew your identity, he would sell you without any profit - charging only its cost price. The same Shri Sultan Singh II who was with me in the Development Deptt. earlier was posted in my place. I do not know for certain but it was my hunch that he "manipulated" this posting. He owned hundreds of acres of agricultural land and had grown the best variety of wheat. Might have obliged the concerned officers in the Union Home Ministry. What to do then? I went to Datia and told Maharajji about my plight. His first question was whether my pay had been reduced. I replied in the negative since the grade was the same. He then asked me why I was not happy in going there. I humbly replied "Maan hani" hai Maharaj" I would have to work with mental patients and the the place of work was also quite far from my residence. Perhaps he realised my worry and then said "Then don't leave your chair" (Now note the humurous aspect of this incident) I told him that since orders have already been issued I will have to vacate the chair. Tomorrow, my successor would come and take his charge from me. But, he again repeated "How can two persons sit on one chair at a time. If you do not vacate the chair, how would he sit. It now occurred to me as if he was deliberately trying not to understand me. I therefore raised my voice and said "Maharajji why don't you try to understand my point. I will not get my pay from this deptt. and I would be forcibly turned out." But, he again smiled and again repeated his same sentence. "Prakashji, I simply do not understand how can two persons sit on the same chair at the same time. In utter disgust I took his leave and returned to Delhi. When Girija asked me what happened I told her plainly that Mahrajji was in an extra-jovial moved and did not appear to have taken my request seriously. Next day I went to the office as usual with the intention of handing over charge. All the cases of assessment of tax fixed for that day were given adjournments and I sat idle, asking my peon to bring tea at regular intervals. This is how I passed two long hours. At about 12, I rang up the Head office, the Superintendent of the Administration Department as to why Shri Sultan Singh had not turned up. He told me that Sultan Singh was down with fever and had requested for two days' casual leave.

I decided to wait for two more days and did not fix any case for hearing. In fact I had lost all interest in that work. After two days I again telephoned the Supdtt. Adm. to ascertain the position. He now told me that Sultan Singh's fever had not abated and he had asked for one more week's leave. Since I could not sit idle for one week at a stretch, I started doing my job. I however (without myself) started smelling a rat in this continuous absence on leave of Sultan Singh. I did not utter a word. After passing one week I again phoned up the Supdtt. (My office was at 2 Battery Lane in the Civil Line Area while the Head Office was at Indra Prastha Estate. (On the back of the Income Tax Deptt.). This time the suptt. told me that Sultan Singh had informed the Sales Tax Commissioner that while his own temperature had come down, his wife had fallen ill rather badly and had requested for a month's earned leave. The Commissioner also directed Mr.Gupta to inform me to continue with my work till further orders. The ultimate result was that I did not vacate my chair for six years at a stretch though the normal tenure was of three years. Is there any shadow of doubt that Mahrajji manipulated everything to my desire. When I next went to Datia, I apologized and fell at his feet for being pardoned for my behaviour Mahrajji had infathomable compassion and immediately ran his hand over my head and back and pacified me. He, however again jocurlaly remarked "Par Prakashji aap rahe moorkh ke moorkh hi". This word he had used many times earlier also. I thought, perhaps, because I had not been able to understand what he meant by saying that "two persons could not sit on one chair at a time and that if I did not vacate my chair, how could anybody else sit on it. In the past, particularly when I was only an adolescent such situations arose several times when I could not understand the hidden meanings of his utterance and this incident however soon became known to almost all my guru Bhais like Dr. Yogesh Mishra, Sagar etc. and particularly Mishra who wanted to hear it again and again. Later on, however, I had become an expert in understanding him. I have already given some instances of this nature in my article "End of an Era" which is enclosed with this book.

When I was in service, many of my friends and colleagues used to go to Maa Vaishno Devi-Shrine. Full buses used to be chartered but when ever I intended to go, something or the other happened with the result it became impossible for me to accompany my friends. Sometimes it was due to my own sudden illness, sometimes Girija's illness and sometimes not getting leave due to the exigencies of official work. I was very anxious to pay at least one visit. One day when I went to Datia, I could not hide my disgust and told Mahrajji that being a "Shakti Sadhak" it is all the more painful that I am not able to go there while many of my friends go there regularly every year. Mahrajji replied "Why should you desire to go there. Your vaishno Devi is right here, pointing towards Peetambara Mai, whatever you desire you can get right here. She is here to grant you boon!' I became quiet and forgot about ever going to Vaishno Devi. After my retirement from service however, when I was staying with Gyani (my son) who was posted at Jammu I had a desire to visit Vaishno Devi - not for asking any boon but purely on a pleasure trip - just for the heck of it. I wanted to see the place and find out why millions of people go there. There must be something special I supposed. So I asked Gyani to arrange for my visit. He deputed an Air man who was a resident of the same place and was well conversant with the surroundings and every thing else. Gyani was kind enough to give him leave of absence. Next morning the man came and asked me "Pitaji chaliye" I had not slept for the whole night and was vomitting and feeling pain in my stomach due to a deudenal ulcer of which I had been a patient for many years. By the time he came I was already exhausted. I, thus, could not make it and the matter ended though the desire remained.After some days it appeared in the Newspapers that a "Helicopter Service' had been started from Jammu to Vaishno Devi Shrine for the benefit of pilgrims I asked gyani to find out the details. He confirmed it and said the fare would be round 450/- to go. A total of Rs.900/- was not too much and I decided to go but then asked gyani to wait for a couple of days more so that I could become absolutely fit physically. However when I thought I could go Gyani informed me that due to a protest lodged by the 'Air Force' on security grounds, the said service had been stopped. Although I stayed in Jammu for almost two years at a stretch I just could not make it. I then realised what Mahrajji had told me earlier.

Mahrajji was meditating those days for very long hours at a stretch as if he had gone in a "shell" and thus attendance at 'Peetambara Peeth' was thin those days and one evening only four boys were sitting with him. One of them was Sita Ram, the second was his younger brother, Radhey Shaym the third was one Mangal Singh and the fourth myself. Maharajji suddenly asked all of us a question "Suppose boys your Guru is pleased with you and is prepared to grant any boon you ask for what would you ask for? Sita Ram was first to respond" I want learning, knowledge and education, Sir. I want Saraswati to be pleased with me" His younger brother Radhey Shyam said, "Mahrajji, I want money and money alone" Mangal Singh said "I want power I want to become a powerful person in life" Then came my turn. I said "Ishwar Bhagti'' is what I want but in the same breath I said "Dono Jahan ka sukh" I had heard this phrase form Baua long ago. Maharajji smiled and said that though I did not indicate anything firmly yet I retraced just in time. He said "Pahle to aap dhil mil ho gaye they lekin samay per sambhal gaye zara bhi der kar de te to kaam bigar jaata" That means I retraced before he could react or grant the desired boon. The topic ended there and none of us imagined even in our dreams that he had actually granted our boons. In course of time things began to become clear. Sita Ram appeared for his Matriculation exam and passed in the 1st division with distinction in two subjects and went to prosecute his studies further. This was quite rare those days. After finishing his education, he got a job in the Audit and Accounts Deptt., had a stint at London and retired as Deputy Accountant General from Allahabad and has settled in Allahabad only. He has a son and Daughter-in-law. Both are doctors and are running their own clinics. He told me recently when we met in Datia that by the grace of Mai and Maharajji he is absolutely fine and is leading a very happy life. Apparently, he got Lakshmi through Saraswati, which is normal as

Mahrajji often said. His boon came true. Radhey Shyam became criminal lawyer and generally took the cases of dacoits only who paid him huge amounts as fees. Dacoits were galore in M.P. those days and Radhey Shyam minted money. He built a house of his own and lived peacefully for years, till he got paralysis and was confined to bed. He could still come to Peetambra Peeth and I met him a few years back. His boon therefore was also granted. The third one, Mangal Singh, after passing his High School exam. got a job in the Police Deptt. as a Sub-Inspector but since he was transferred to some other place outside Datia after independence, I became totally out of touch with him and do not know anything about him. However, the very fact that he had joined the Police Deptt. clearly indicates that he must have been weilding powers and that is what he wanted.

As regards myself, I cannot hide the fact that I got far more than what I had desired or even dreamt. So far as "Ishwar Bhagti" is concerned, I must be the envy of many worshippers. There is no denying the fact that umpteen times in my life I had Mai and Mahrajji's darshan in my dreams. Not only did they give "darshan" but several times also talked to me. This is a rare feature I suppose. So far as the other part of the boon is concerned, everyone knows that I am living a prince's life. There is absolutely nothing which I do not have and for which I may aspire. A sufficient bank-balance, a car at my disposal wherever I want to go and an army of servants at my disposal. So far as car is concerned I may state that in a small place like Datia when I got a heart attack and was to be shifted to Jhansi for admission to a hospital, a chauffenr driven imported car was standing at my gate. So, did Maharajji's words, "Kar wala to bina kar ke kabhi nahein reh sakta'' came out true to the last syllable? In this context I may also add that in a dream when mai appeared before me, she said "By now you have had 500 births and as many deaths this is your five hundred and first birth. Note, that after this you will be free from this cycle of births and deaths. This is definitely your last life". Is this not unlimited kindness? I have no words to thank HER. After all, who can? The same thing Maharajji had also once said, though in other words He said "Prakashji, though you are a lazy person, not given to hard work, yet you will cross this ocean (he used the word Bhav Sagar) quite easily; to my mind he meant "Moksh" - the ultimate which a person should desire for. Maharajji often used to say that a person who came to this earth should endeavour to attain four aims only and then his mission of life could be treated as successful. These four achievements are 1. Arth, 2. Dharm, 3. Kaam and 4. Moksh.

Explaining them he said first a person should strive to earn money. When he gets it, he should spend it on "dharma", "Dharm" did not mean religion but his duties. To serve his old parents comes under this head. The maintaining of his wife and children properly was also "Dharm" in short, all his lawful duties, respecting his teachers and Guru etc. The third is "Kaam". This means "Ichchayen", in fulfilling his desires which would include building a house, with furniture, buying a conveyance. In short, to attain everything which satiates his desires. That would mean that he has lived a full life. And, now, comes the last but not the least "Moksh" He should endeavour to pray continuously with a "detached" feeling i.e. with no attachment to whatever he had yearned for in a materialistic manner but to concentrate on god and god alone with undivided attention since this would be his hardest achievement. Guru Maharaj granted all these four boons to me even before he merged with the Absolute.

What more a person can now aspire for?

One morning while I was sitting with him, he asked "Prakashji" can you speak a sentence or two in Sanskrit also with an elated feeling I replied "Yes sir" several years earlier I had heard a Sanskrit phrase from my mother and as it came to my m nd at that moment I spoke, sir, "Dwaram ke narkam Nar kashye nari. He smiled and then said "Prakashji, the correct word is "Narkasya Nari" and not "Narkashchyanari" I thanked him for this correction. In the mornings he generally used to be all alone when I went there with a flask of hot "Lipton Green Label" tea and we used to chat till he finished his tea. One day he told me that besides reading one's palm he could also read one's soles as well and asked me to show my soles to him. I did and he devoted several minutes to read them but then only said "Theek hail'. I again did not quite understand what he meant by theek hai and there was also no time for seeking clarification as he got up immediately. But whatever I could think was that he wanted to see whether I would have a car under my feet or not. But it is just an interpretation. "Theek hai" perhaps meant that I would have a car at my disposal whether I owned it or not. I withdrew my feet. By this time he had finished his tea and then said his time for meditation had come and he got up bidding me good-bye.

My second elder sister, Rajjan Didda, once told me while we were chatting that Bhaiji desired that two of his grand sons be named Yogi and Giani, so could I fulfil his desire I replied "No problem didda" provided I got two sons. Indeed I got two sons later on. Girija confided that she would like to name then as "Shekhar" and Pankaj but I did not heed her at all. I simply told her that my father's sentiments were far dearer to me then anything else in the world. She gracefully relented and I admired her. Another woman might have become obstinate and created unnecessary unpleasantness. So Yogi and Giani were named. I am mentioning this here because one morning Swamiji did ask this question "Prakashji what names have you given to your sons and when I replied Yogi and Giani, sir, he atonce said "very good". I would ask my readers to ponder whether any saint would bother to know the names of his disciples children certainly not would be my reply. I had no proper aasan to sit on and pray - the one given to me earlier by Bari didda had completely worn out by then due to its continuous use while maharajji used to get several from his other disciples. I knew they were lying in the store-room. So, one day, while sitting at his foot I requested him if I could have an old assan (I meant rejected by him) for my use. I was confident he would not refuse my request. However, to my utter surprise he said "Not yet Prakashji". Although I made bold to emphasise that by "aasan" I never meant his "Gaddi" but he repeated "Abhi Nahin Sahib" I deeply regret that till date I have not been able to understand what he actually meant by that remark I consulted several of my fellow brothers including Dr.Yogesh Mishra who lives in Jaipur and himself has hundreds of disciples and who is definitely very high in spiritualism, could not interpret this remark. He has translated several books which were published for Peetambra Peeth.

One day while I was going to Datia, and when the train stopped at Gwalior, a young boy entered my compartment and recognising me greeted me "Chachaji Namaste" and sat by my side. He was "Hari" son of one Babu Raghunath Sahai, the accountant general in the erstwhile Datia State and a very close friend of Bhai Sahib. B.R.Sahai used to come to our house almost everyday to play bridge. We had family relations with him and we all addressed him as "Barey Bhai Sahib" since he was older to Bhai Sahib. There was thus no question of not recognising him. He had several books with him and he started talking. He said that he was coming from Putta Parthi or some such name I don't remember (nor do I wish to remember) where Sat Sai Baba resided. He then started praising that Baba. He started showing me the books he had, to show how great the Baba was and what miracles he performed. Out of courtesy I went on listening to him although, frankly speaking, I had absolutely no interest in that silly talk. When the train stopped at the Datia Railway Station and we both got down, he told me "Chachaji, would you like to see a miracle" I said what? He said that this train would not move an inch till you want it to. I said that I was not at all interested in seeing it and moved on and so did the train. When I reached "Peetambra Peeth" maharajji was standing at the very entrance as if waiting quite impatiently. No sooner than he saw me, he frowned at me saying rather harshly "Prakashji", remember one thing for the whole of your life and that is, keep yourself miles away from these conjurers. They wave their hand and produce a diamond ring or a wrist watch. Never, never go near them. Have you understood? I replied "Sir I just heard that fool out of courtesy and nothing absolutely went down my brain. I am five hundred percent sure he was listening to that fool's talk word by word. He was indeed an 'Antaryami' no doubt about it whatsoever.

THE PALMIST's DAY AT PEETAMBRA PEETH

One morning when I was sitting with him, a stranger stepped in. on enquiring by Guruji he said he was a palmist and had come specifically to read his hand. Maharajji replied that he was a faqir only and did not need anything in this world so there did not seem to be any sense in reading his hand. He however added that if he was really anxious to read hands, "please read Prakashji's hand who is sitting right in front of you".

This gentleman then started reading my hand and telling me about the time of the death of my parents, about my service etc. Everything appeared to have been told rather correctly and maharajji was listening quite attentively. After reading the past correctly, he started predicting my future. He said I would go abroad in connection with my service the line which suggests overseas journey had not completely developed so far and would take another eight years to do so and then only I would proceed abroad and added "Go you must" At this point, Maharajji who was till then listening quietly butted in. He said "Prakashji" yeh ye kahe rahay hain hum nahin kahe rahe hein" meaning clearly not to rely on this prediction which was not correct. The meeting ended, gentleman went away and I returned home. Inwardly, however I was feeling elated as there was a genuine reason also for this. I was working at that time in the office of the Chief Commissioner, Delhi (one Mr.A.V..Askwith) and the period was late 1944 or early 1945. At that time, Kashi Bhai's son-in-law, Pt.Shambhu Nath Shivpuri was an Assistant Secy. in the govt. of India, in the external affairs deptt. and was luckily handling administrative matters like appointments etc. Bhai and I often used to go to his house sometimes for lunch and sometimes for dinner. One day Shambhu Bhai suggested to me that there was no scope for promotion in that rather small office and advised me to send an application (through proper channel, as the rules were) for a post in the external affairs deptt. I accordingly put in my application. Mr. Askwith to whom the file was sent for approval himself wrote on it thus. "Mr.Zutshi is doing important work here and cannot be spared. Application rejected." All my plans to go abroad were shattered but Maharajji's words once again came out like the writing on the wall. One day Sagar, Dr.Mishra etc. organised a trip to Kaamakhya and I was also in that party. We reached Guwahati and stayed at a palatial building. Cars, cook food arrangement had already been made by Sagar in advance nothing was wanting. maharajji used to say often that what Mecca and Madina are for Muslims Kaamakhya is a place of "Haj"

[on this 'Haj' I wrote the following couplet]

"Tune baksha shahr-e-Datia ko bhi ek haj ke muqaam
ab hazaaron ko yehin macca madina mil gaya".

(Pilgrimage) for we Hindus and keeping with our guru's instructions this brief trip was organised. We were about twenty to twenty five people including a servant specially taken to attend on me since I was not all that well I was not able to climb the high stairs without assistance and so had taken this servant exclusively for me. We had our pooja, hawan and maa's darshan etc. all peacefully. However, after this the party decided to proceed to Nepal to have a darshan of the famous "Pashupati Nath Temple" located there. A new mini bus was chartered and the next night We were supposed to move. But, suddenly I fell ill and found myself unable to undertake a full twelve hours long journey. I told Sagar to get me an "Air Ticket" for Delhi and inspite of his pleadings that it was a golden opportunity and that I should not miss it I came down to Delhi. Before doing so however, I went to the nearby market accompanied by a local gentleman (who had been specially deputed by our hosts there) and did some shopping. He told me that Assam Raw Silk, Assamese Doria silk, sarees and Assam "Tasar" were very famous and popular. I accordingly purchased a few such sarees and cloth for some kurtas and distributed among my children. After some days while I was cursing my luck for not being able to go to Nepal and thus losing a golden opportunity, my memory went fifty years back to that Palmist Day at the "Peetambra Peeth" where what he said then and how Maharajji rebutted him all shot and through my mind and then I realised the reality how could I ever land in foreign land! That event had taken place when I had just started my career and this event after my retirement thus making a span gap of atleast fifty years apparently seems unimaginable yet true.

From where wisdom dawned on Yogi at that particular moment?

Maharajji was sitting on a chair type 'moorah' and at his feet on either side, I was pressing his right leg while Yogi, his left. Suddenly he pulled back his left leg telling Yogi "Aap rahne deejiye sahib" Yogi atonce pulled it back saying "Maharajji you can't do it. This is my Janam sidhh adhikar meaning truely that he had this right since birth and so none could snatch it. At this Guruji became some what thoughtful and then smilingly said "Bhai aap theek kehte hein'' Please carry on. Yogi, in my guess, scored a point over Maharajji though a very very rare occasion; the other probability is that Maharajji might be testing Yogi's intelligence and reaction at that particular moment. This looks a sounder explanation, I now feel that it was a deliberate action to test Yogi. Yogi was not even born since the time I was pressing his feet (from my childhood) so naturally it became his birthright. How could there be too opinions about it.

The cursed clock A regrettable incident

The Delhi Admn. once organised a tournament for all its officers and staff. There were several disciplines. I also entered my name for 'Chess'. After winning two rounds I was to face a very good player, one Shri Chaturvedi who was then a "Hindi Officer" - looking after the propagative Hindi in the various offices. My friends who knew his game and my game, advised me to withdraw from the contest gracefully because he was sure to check mate me in less than five minutes.

But I decided to accept the challenge. It was the final round and prizes were to be awarded. I was feeling excited. However, a really degrading act was performed by me without the slightest idea of its possible consequences. While going for that final match, what I did was, to go to the portraits of Mai and Maharajji and bowed before them I also uttered in a low tone the following words from "Tara Stotram" **Peeranam waapi sangrame, japye dane tatha bhaye.**

Ya idam Pathati Stotrum, Shubham tasye na sanshaya" I told Maharajji that I am going for a battle and I wish to be the victor. And, I left for the match. We greeted each other and after shaking hands, started the first game. Within two minutes I got his "rook" against a pawn due to a very silly move on his part.After a few more moves he started telling me "Zutshi Sahib, the petrol of my car is fast drying up how shall I carry on". Mistakes one after the other caused his defeat in the first game. I saw him now perspiring and becoming nervous. However, he had a glass of water, composed himself and after a few minutes interval said "Ab aayee sahib". "Now I won't leave you". The second game thus started but in this game too he could not win. He was thoroughly dejected. He refused to believe that he could ever be defeated by me. However, after this game when we shook hands again he meekly said "Zutshi Sahib, it was your day today. I will meet you again some day". At the prize distribution ceremony I was presented a beautiful wall-clock in the presence of a large gathering and with their loud cheers. The Lt.Governor shook me by the hand and congratulated me. I thought it was a proud moment for me. I immediately decided to go to Datia to show that clock to Maharajji in the hope of getting a pat on my back for this "big" achievement. I reached Peetambra Peeth" and again I found Mahrajji standing at the entrance. It was very abnormal of him to stand there. It appeared as if he was waiting for somebody. As soon as I entered and bowed he said "Prakashji, I was under the impression that games are played only for the sake of 'Manoranjan' i.e. pleasure only. Is it desirable to bother gods and goddesses and to trouble them to go to your help, just for a sport". I felt really ashamed. I was perspiring from head to. foot and in that condition I again fell on his feet and asked for an apology promising at the time never to repeat such a silly mistake in the whole of my life. He appeared to have pardoned me since I knew he was full of compassion.

A few points however emerge from this incident -

1. He was a confirmed "Anter Yami" rightly an Incarnation of Lord Shiva. He fully knew what all was happening at Delhi actually he was seeing it just as we see things on a picture frame.
2. He was anxiously waiting for none else except me and so was waiting at the entrance itself because after this he immediately came back to his original seat.
3. He himself had to take the trouble of coming to Delhi to help me.
4. He wanted to teach me a lesson for my whole-life that I should never "Cry wolf". Only on rare occasion should we seek help not for frivolties. Yes, after this incident, even my fore-fathers could not dare to take out that cursed clock from the suit-case to show to him. Enough was enough.

To be an 'Anter Yami' is not very unusual for saints and sages. India for one, has always been blessed with such saints. Some of them are god-incarnates and come to this earth as has been rightly mentioned in the Geeta "Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir Bhawati Bharatah". Formany centuries, people have been seeing them, worshipping them even when they had disappeared after completing their missions. Shri Swamiji Maharaj of Datia, M.P.; Baba Guru Nanak of Punjab, Swami Ram Krishna Param Hans of Bengal, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, Anand mai Maa, meera 'Bai of Rajasthan, Neem Karauli Baba etc. This would become an unending list if I go on naming them. They were all capable of performing miracles and knew full well everything about everybody. They were the greats "who in reality" left their foot prints on the sand of Time.

If somebody is anxious to know in some further details about these extra ordinary saints, I would recommend at least two books which they should read. one is the "autobiography of a Yogi by Swami Yogananda" and the other "Living with the Himalayan Masters" by Swami Ram. A copy of each of them is available with yogi. These books would show how saints could lavitate how they could inflate their bodies to ward off sting bites of mosquitoes and how they could appear simultaneously at different places. Incidentally I may make it clear that personally, I don't agree with Swami Yogananda on one point atleast ie, when he advises his readers to charter out their further course of action independently after taking lessons from their "Guru" saying that the Guru's role ended here.

In my confirmed view on the basis of my own life long experience the disciple needs his Guru even till his death and should never for sake him as Yogananda advises. one must always remember that the Guru never dies. Even after he merges with the Supreme Being he remains with you always, provided ofcourse he is a "Sud Guru". (or is it, Sat Guru, am not sure). As an example, I may state that my Guru still comes in my dreams, tells me, advises me, scolds me, warns me, praises me and guides me in all my deeds. Even if the world does not believe it I don't care. A few instances reflecting these sentiments could be known from my article "End of an Era". How he was constantly advising me while I wrote it.

And remember this was genuine and real. This also reminds me of a story told to me by Maharajji's desciples. Two boys Kishan Prakash Ungal and Radha Raman Doorbar were once asked by Guruji to go to Hardwar, have a bath in the Ganga and then come back. They went. After taking a bath, both started roaming about in the vicinity. There are little mountains and they climbed on one such. They found a cave and saw a sadhu sitting at the entrance. When they went nearer he asked who they were and from where had they come. They pondered for a minute and decided between them that if they say 'Datia' the Sadhu would not understand, it being an insignificant place. So they replied "Jhansi" thinking Jhansi to be a bigger place and that the Sadhu might be knowing it. On hearing "Jhansi" the Sadhu said that near Jhansi there was also a small place named "Datia" and asked whether they knew it. These boys then confessed that they were actually from Datia itself. He then asked them if they knew the "Swami of Peetambra Peeth". When the boys replied that it was he only who had sent them there he said "He is a great saint, several times we talk to each other". These two saints obviously did not have telephones or any other modern means of communication. How could they talk to each other? I did not know how far this anecdote is true but I do remember one of these guys himself told this to me. Why should he lie?

MAHARAJJI's LOVE FOR MUSIC

My Bauaji had four cousins. Oh, no it would be only mean to call them cousins. They actually were more than her four real brothers and treated her like a queen whenever she had an occassion to visit any of them. I know it personally as I always accompanied Baua.

They were Pt.Pyare Swaroop Tikku, Pt.Nand Lal Tikku, Pt.Shyam Narain and Pt.Shiv Narain Tikku. The eldest (No.1), we addressed as "Pyare Mamu". He was Supdtt. of Police then at Meerut, No.2 was in the Railways (about whom I have already written). Number three was Supdt. of Excise and for long, remained posted at the famous Sambar Salt Lake. The last perhaps did not work (I am not sure How). He was a lover of music and several times I noticed him singing and playing on his harmonium. When he saw Bhai Pearey evincing some interest in music he presented to him a harmonium and a book in urdu by "Bhatkhande" on music. Bhai Pearey thus started playing on the harmonium with the help of that book. Youngsters generally tend to copy their elders and this is a common phenomenon we see it daily everyday. I therefore also started playing on it without knowing even its notations. When Bhai Pyare saw me doing this, he arranged a teacher to teach me music in a systematic way. My teacher was an old man and was totally blind. One or two days he came with an escort but very soon started coming alone. I simply marvelled how a blind person crossed the busy markets safely and reached his destination. First he taught me the "Sargam" Saa, Re, gama and after some days started teaching the "Ragas". First he taught me Rag "Yaman" then "Kaafi", "Bhairavi" and the "Bilawal". I practised rather strenuously but most unfortunately, he soon passed away. My music classes were over for ever although the urge to learn more music remained.

One day when I was sitting with Maharajji, he enquired whether I knew something about the Hindustani Classical Music I replied "Yes Sir". I have learnt classical music systematically for several months. He then asked me to sing "Raag Desh" for him. This particular "Raag" was not taught to me by my late teacher andso I could not sing it. However I atonce remembered a song sung by the all times famous singer K.L.Saigal in a picture "Dev Das" and I knew it was in "Raag Desh" I immediately started "Dukh ke din beetat naahin; Na mein kisi ka, na koi mera, chhaya charon ore andhera''. He listened quite attentively and then remarked "Prakashji Yeh Sorath hai". I kept mum with the result that till today I do not know whether "Sorath" is the name of a bird or an animal I think I should have been bold enough to request him to clarify it. Then he asked me to sing a "Bhairavi" which I did because that I had been taught. He then told me that there was another version of this "Raag" called "Sindhi Bhairavi" and gave its demonstration. Its "bol" were "tero kahna Mai Jumuna na jan det" while I fully know the distinction between the two frames, I cannot describe them on paper. He was at the moment of time surely in a musical mood. He also kept an Ek Taara and played on it. He then gave me a demonstration of Raag "Bageshwari". Its "Bol" were "Ab mein kaa se bair karoon ghut ghut mein tum hi to basat ho...) "Bageshwarl" was his most favourite "Raag" I thought he was trying to increase my knowledge of music and I keenly followed.

Immediately, after my marriage when I took Girija for a "honey-moon" to Datia and invited him for a dinner, maharajji asked Girija to sing a "Bageshwari" for him. During the after-dinner talks he had been apprised of her talent. She had 'music' as one of the subjects for her matriculation examination. Not only that, the person who came to examine her was none else than Prof.Ratan Jayanker, the then principal of the renowned Maurice College of Music in Lucknow. He was a desciple of the modern day "Taan Sen" of India "Pt. Vishnu Digamber Pulaskar". It was the unanimous verdict of learned people that after Tansen of the Akbar days, India had produced only "Vlshnu Digamber" almost of that calibre. He was also luckily to have some excellent desciples like Pt.Onkar Nath Thakur, Krishna Rao Shankar, Pt. Narayan Rao, Ratan Jayanker besides his own son D.V.Paluskar (who unfortunately died quite early) and a host of many others who excelled and distinguished themselves and made a mark in music and took music to the pinnacle mark of Glory, Pt.Onkar Nath's immortal song "Mitwa Balamwa and" "Matja, matja Jogi" were so popular that their records were played in every house I heard these records on the gramophone itself. I hope their music has been made into casettes by now.

This Ratan Jayankar was also a distinguished disciple of Pt.Vishnu Digamber. After hearing her song he patted Girija on her back and told her that she had a very good voice and that she must continue with her music even after her marriage. She also got a gold medal in that examination from him.

So Maharajji asked Girija to sing a song in raag Bageshwari. Which she did. I was married to her on the 4th of Dec. 1948 and this incident occured during the same month but Maharajji, after a gap of about thirty years when we were with him reminded Girija whether she remembered she had sung a "Bageshwarl" to him. Girija replied in the affirmative. He then asked her whether she was still continuing her music. Before she could give a reply I butted in and said, "Maharajji", she now uses her voice only for quarelling with me and not for music. He smiled and said quite humoursly that he did not believe me. However, the point here to note is that even after so many years, he remembered that minor event of 1948. Girija however clarified that with so many children and house-hold chores to perform she did not get time even to scratch her head. This was a hard reality and Maharajji also nodded his head in affirmation.

Oneday I was sitting with him along with Yogi and Giani. Suddenly he asked both these boys the same question which he had asked me many years back "If your Guru gets pleased with you what boon would you ask for". Both gave their respective replies at which he said "Nothing doing". Tomorrow you can deny that you did not say this. So, please take a pen and paper and put you requests in writing. They both wrote their wishes on separate pieces of paper in Hindi. Maharajji read them and then asked Yogi whether he knew "urdu" as well. When Yogi replied in the negative he said he knew urdu and taking a pen and a piece of paper wrote in fine urdu "Agar Namo-nishan".

These three words were actually a part of a couplet from ustad "Daag" which ran as follows :-

"Agar Naamo-nishan puchhey koi- to Daag batlana.
Takhhalus "Daag" hai aur Ashiqon ke dil mein rehte hein."

As I have said earlier also, he never said or did anything without some purpose though many a time we might not have been able to decipher them. Thus, even in these three words which he had written, volumes which a lay man, I am sure, would not be able to make out, were spoken. Yes, of course one who knew him intimately could do so. My long association with him since child-hood had enabled me to understand him. Does not, "long communion tend to make us what we are"? Even I had to tax my brain hard to decipher the meaning of these words which he wanted to convey to us.

"Daag" means a scar, in urdu or a "dhabba" and since this scar is always found in the hearts of the lovers (in urdu poetry) a lover in always treated as a frustrated lover - he never meets his beloved. So ustad Daag used his "Thakhallus" to convey his identify - he was present in every frustrated lovers heart because of his Thakallus. But, it should be noted here that Maharajji did not use the words "Daag" or "Ashiq" in the three words. He simply wanted to convey that ifsomeone asked for his name and identity etc. one should look into one's own heart and the hearts of thousands and thousands of his disciples and followers where he resided and shall be found and this is a fact which none can deny. This I dare say. The crowds which throng "Peetambra Peeth" everyday also bear this testimony.

Yes, this piece of paper has been rightly preserved by Yogi as a treasure. If I get it I would have it published in this booklet itself.

Hundreds of his disciples, I know, would love to see Maharajji's hand writing in urdu.

GURU MAHARAJ AND URDU POETRY

Not only was he a great scholar of Sanskrit and Hindi, he also knew a lot of urdu poetry. So far as Sanskrit is concerned, I myself saw many students appearing for their M.A. in Sanskrit examination coming to him for lessons and he used to teach them. His translation of Vedas and publishing several books bear ample testimony ard would never call for a debate.

When I used to visit him as an adolescent he advised me to carry a pen and a note-book with me so that he could dictate some useful things as and when required. I complied. The first thing he dictated to me were some of the following couplets.

"Darte raho ye zindagi bekar na ho jaaye. Sapne mein kisi jeev ka upkar na ho jaye. Paaya hai tan sadachar ke liye vishyon mein per ke tum se anachar na ho jaye sewa karo sub desh ke shubh karm Hari Bhajan Itna bhi kar ke pichhe ahankar na hojaye, Manzil asal Muqam ki tai karni hai tumhein jag thug nagar mein phuns ke girftar no ho jaye Madho lagi hai Bazi maya moh jaal ki Dhoke mein par ke dekh, Kahin haar na ho jayee" He then asked me to repeat it audibly several times till I remembered it by heart. I still remember it by heart although the said note book got lost many years back. On another day he dictated to me the following :

"Khameeda kar ta hai insaan ko johar Sharafat ka
wo hi talwar Jhukti hai asalet jisme hoti hai.

Another, "Hindu ne sanam mein paya jalwa tera Aatish Mughan ne raag gaya tera Dehri ne keeya Dehr se Taabeer Inkar kisi se na ban Paya tera". He often repeated to his other disciples the following couplet of Bhaiji.

"Dua teri aye "Lal" Maqbool hogi Tu Qadmon pe sar ko jhukaye chala jaa".

He had once heard this from me. Oneday, a person came to him from somewhere outside Datia while I was also sitting at his feet. He told Maharajji that some other person (I don't remember his name) wanted to send some message (may be some request) but then said he would come himself personally for that purpose some day.

Now note maharajas instaneous response which would indicate his knowledge of urdu poetry combined with his sense of wit & humour. He simply said smilingly "Theek hai", kahan se laaye ga qasid bayan mera zuban meri.

This aroused my excitement and I fanatically desired to know the first line of this couplet. Foolishly I had remained quiet at that moment otherwise Maharajji himself would have told me. I had never developed the habit of speaking before him by that time, because Bhaiji had advised me earlier not to speak at all before him but to listen only. He also advised me to stare in his eyes if he ever looked at me. This I also did faithfully. Maharajji used to stare in my eyes and I in his for quite a few minutes at a stretch and then he used to wink his lids for a fraction of a minute with a smile to restart the session. I derived lot of internal happiness from these sessions but for sure I never knew their implications. It was very late in the day and he was gone, when I learnt that it was one of the ways the Gurus did "shakti Paat" on their disciples. They fill their disciples with "Shakti" by staring in their eyes.

I must again confess that I was a fool to have considered those sessions as a matter of fun and 'frolic only whereas, infact, he was filling my earthly body with divine energy. I learnt this from my senior Guru-Bhais when I told them I used to do this with Mahrajji.

Yes, I was talking about that half couplet which was haunting me all the time without any success. I searched the biggest casette stores at Agra and Nagpur etc. and wherever I went on my trips with Sagar but to no avail.

Oneday however I found a casette filled with the ghazals of

"Kamla Jharia'' a reputed songster of yester years. I atonce bought it and brought it to Datia where I was staying those days and started playing it on my two-in-one, presented to me by Sagar. Couplets in this ghazal also ended with the words "Meri and this is actually what I had searched for unfortunately however, that couplet was still not there. I was totally dejected but what could I do. I lost all hopes of ever finding it I scanned all my urdu books of poetry I had, but nothing came out and I reconciled myself to fate. However, several years after my retirement, oneday when I was just listening to the "urdu Majlis" programme of A.I.R. the announcer announced that she would recite to the listeners a couplet received by her from somebody. That was the same couplet I had been searching for the last many years. It was:-

"Maza tab tha ke sunte khud mujhi se daastan meri,
Kahan se laayega, Qasid bayan meri zaban meri,"

Sincerely speaking, my joy knew no bounds and I considered myself as the happiest person on earth at that moment. Along desire fulfilled. By quoting this example I first want to tell how much knowledge he had of urdu poetry. One morning while I was sitting with him he received his copy of journal "Kalyan" published from Geeta Press Gorakhpur. These editions he used to receive regularly. He glanced at a few pages and then passed on to me with the remark that it contained something of my interest.

He told me that it contained "Shakti Chaalisa" and that I should note it down in my note-book which I already had with me. I started copying it in urdu as I could only read Hindi but could not write.

Every stanza of it had four lines each in praise of the various goddesses - each devoted to one goddess only like Durga, Mahamaya, Kali etc. After finishing it when I glanced through it, it looked like the unending odyssy of Homer. Anyway, I had to learn it as ordered. I made a few readings but honestly, I did not enjoy it as much as I should have. The main reason was "why should I indulge in the praises of other "Devis" when my own Mother Maa Kali" deserved all these praises which were being showered on other goddesses. Thus the idea was a little unpalatable to me. I sincerely wish to make it clear to my readers that I had absolutely no intention of indulging in blasphemy in any way particularly when Maharajji had long before advised me never to consider anyother goddess either inferior or superior to my own "Mother". Now look at the coincidence. Out of the forty stanzas I could remember one and only one and which I found to have fitted me in all my grooves. It related to "Maa Kali" only and ran thus :-

"Yame faizo karam ho chashmaye zoodo-sukha kuli Ata pasho, khataposho jaha haajat ravan kali usey kab kaal ka khatka raha jisne kaha kali Maha Kali, Maha kali, Maha kali, Maha kali."

"Namastasyaee, Namastasyaee, Namastasyaee namo namah"

Here I would like to tell a very closely guarded secret which I have kept in my heart - not divulging it ever even to Girija. Even today I might not have opened it but realising that I am now shortly going to retire after a long innings and have no fear of death any more. I am revealing this secret. In that stanza, the writer had said, "usey kab kaal ka khatka"... Initially when I started reciting it while at my pooja, I started having lots of troubles. I was already suffering from an old dudenal ulcer but it lay dormant but whenever I recited this stanza, it suddenly became active and troubled me a lot. Severe pain in my stomach with vomitting took place. Girija brought hot water bottles after bottles and kept awake the whole nights for fomentation but still I had no relief. I had started having bad premonitions and ugly dreams. One night it appeared as if "Kaal" himself was standing before me and warning me to be afraid of him otherwise he would teach me a lesson. This made me completely disturbed and preplexed. At no cost did I desire to stop reciting that stanza because it was only showering praises on my "Maa". I had a large family to support, coupled with limited financial resources. Children were too small to take care of themselves. In short, I did not want to die in those circumstances to leave the children as orphans. So I was infact scared of "Kaal". Then what to do? Suddenly a thought came to my mind. I removed the word "Kaal" and substituted it with the words "usey kis baat ka khatka raha jisne kaha kali". Most surprisingly, all my troubles vanished like ether in the air. No further bad dreams thereafter.

After Girija's death I composed - few couplets on "Death" only.

Dekhiyekya kar dikhaya maut ne, Rooh urti hai dikhaya maut ne

Mein Yahan dozakh mein wo jannat naseeb kaise dono ko milaya maut ne

Kis taraf jae dhoond te jannat ko hum rasta khud hi dikhaya maut ne

Muntazar baitha hoon uski rah mein Ab bullaya, as bullaya maut ne.

Before my marriage I used to go to Maharajji just as a disciple goes to his Guru to learn his lessons but after my marriage when my responsibilities and liabilities alongwith their consequential worries and anxieties increased manifold, I started going to him with my problems like the ancient Greeks who went to the "Oracle of Delphi" to seek advice, to hear premonitions and seek solutions to their problems.

At such meetings the initial reaction of maharajji used to be "Prakashji aap humse grihasti ki baten kyon puchhte hain Hum koi girhast to nahin hain". But when I answered that question, thus "Maharajji you are absolutely right but just tell me where else should I go for advice. He used to smile and say, "Yes" tell me what is your problem. I explained it and then he would give me the soundest advice and I would return to Delhi.

Here I must add that I never came back empty-handed. Whatever be my problem, it was solved. His love and affection, kindness and mercy towards me, had no bounds.

At the Peetambra peeth every Sunday evening was (and is still) a music evening. Maharajji had desired that since Bhaironji was supposed to be a great lover of music, we must sing to please him. Initially only the local singers came to perform and the gatherings had thin attendance but as time passed by, musicians from far and wide started coming.

In Dhaulpur (previously, it was spelt Dhawalpur) I had a chum by the name of Kamal Singh who was of about the same age as I was-,slightly younger to me rather. He used to sing very well. He was then learning music from a renowned ustad named "Bilas Khan". This Bilas Khan used to receive some five or ten rupees per month from the state as stipend, salary or whatever you may call it. I think that was his pay as court musician. I was still a child then but remember that he was living "below the poverty line". His all-time dress was a dirty looking "Lungi" or tehband,, as it was called in Dhaulpur. How nicely he taught Kamal Singh became evident when oneday this boy was invited to Agra for a concert. After his return from Agra he told me that he sang the raag "Maru bihag" whose "bol" were "Lat uljhi suljha ja re balam haathon mein meray mehndi lagi hai". This function, he said, was presided over by Pt.Onkar Nath Thakore and he patted him on his back after his peerformance and said "Bahut achhey, beta gaatey raho aur lagey raho". This was the most precious appreciation he could have ever received.

Mian Tansen of Akbar days is reported to have invented a raag (or perhaps gave a new dimension) "Torhi" which has been named as Mian Ki Torhi". It is still sung all over the country. This poor man Bilas Khan was also such a genius that he also gave another new twist to this "raag torhi" which was also universally accepted and sung by great musicians as "Bilas Khani Torhi". It was considered as a very great achievement which was lauded and applauded but then imagine this greatman, living in penury.

Ustad Adil Khan. There was one more boy of almost my age in Dhaulpur whom we all adressed "Adalua" and he also sang very well. I am not sure, but I think he was the son of ustad Bilas Khan himself. Music must have been in his blood. He was one eyed. When he grew older, he began to be recognised as a great singer and people started addressinghim as "Ustad Adil Khan". There is an old saying "Maya tere teen naam Parsa, Parsu, Paras Ram" It applied to Adalua as well. I do not know but my feeling is that he must have considered Dhaulpur too small a place for recognition and so shifted to Jhansi a bigger place, to seek new "pastures". Jhansi is very near

Datia and one day he came down to Datia's "Peetambra Peeth". Here he sang before Maharajji and immediately won his heart. Maharajji could not hide his happiness to the extent that he voluntarily asked him that he would like to give him some "Mantra" the rendering of which would take him to far greater heights. What "Mantra" should I give you "Asked maharaja and the maestro replied" I do not want either a Hindu Mantra or a Muslims Mantra. What I want only is a "Music mantra" Maharajji happily gave him one and only a short time there after he began to rise to attract the attraction of the Media and began to be invited to big concerts from within and out of the country. "From rags to riches to glory". Since I am talking about him, I do not think it would be too much to relate an incident told to me by Sagar. Sagar's father Pt.Ram Narain Sharma, engaged Adil Khan to teach Sagar some music. He thus came to Sagar's house everyday to teach him. Oneday Sagar asked him "ustaad aaj to aap kuchh sunaayiye" and Adil Khan obliged. After a few minutes Sagar started laughing a boisterous child as he was ustad atonce stopped his singing and shouted at Sagar "Abay Vaid ki Aulaad, hansta hei, sale, itna maaroonga ke bus" and left the place. Clearly the man was far above money - never to return. Yes, I was talking about the music evenings on sundays at the "Peetambra Peeth". As I said earlier renowned musicians had started coming to perform there including the internationally renowned Rajan and Sajan Mishra brothers without charging a single penny. What a coincidence? As I am writing this piece, this morning's Indian Express is before me and it contains a news-item that some institution has decided to give then an award of rupees one lakh in Varanasi for their contributions to music. Their main aim was to please "Mai" and "Maharaj" with their performance and then to get their blessing. Sometimes they used to be invited but some other times they came of their own.

It is said that once Dagar Bandhu while going to Bombay, broke their journey at Datia to perform. When they started preparing - the harmonium, the tabla and the taanpura was brought for the purpose, Maharajji abruptly said that he was not in a mood to hear. He agreed to listen to them only the nextday. These renowned singers had naturally very busy schedules. They were to perform in Bombay and were in great hurry. But, they thought they could not dare to displease Maharajji.

They waited for the next day to perform and Maharajji listened to them patiently and said "now you can go" Later on, this mystery was solved. The train by which they were intending to go had met with an accident and several persons had been reported killed. Maharajji must have fore seen all this and therefore, to save his disciples from any possible danger, manipulated to hold them in Datia itself.

Maharaja used to contribute articles to the "Kalyan" of Gorakhpur and such articles later on were collected and compiled to form a book which was published by the Peetambra Peeth Parishad as

"Lekh Sanghraya". Several books, prominent among them being "Vedic Updesh", annotated by Swamiji himself were published and find place in the Peeth library.

One day, Swamiji told me in confidence "Prakashji, I want you to make some "Hindus" and for that purpose you can have as many books as you may need from our library - even free of cost if you so desire. He then added "if you do this" there would be "Force Behind". These words, spoken by him in English only repeated verbatim here, were striking.

I immediately nodded compliance and went to the library, bought a complete set of all the books and brought them to Delhi. However, in Delhi I found that people were not inclined to become "Hindus" at all western influence was over shadowing the Eastern culture.

People derived great pleasure by talking in english even with those who knew, Hindi. The ancient greetings of Namaskar and, "Ram Ram Sahib" had yielded place to "Good Mornings" "Hai" and "Hellos". Not only had this become a fashion but also a matter of pride.

THE NEW COLONIALISM

I would passionately suggest to my readers to read a piece written by Mark Tully entitled "The New colonialism (Page 57 to 86) in his book "No full stops in India". Where he would note that he being a Britisher himself "profoundly disagrees" with Nirad C.Chowdhri in dedicating his "Autobiography of an unknown Indian" to the memory of the British Empire, saying all that was good and living within us, was made shaped and quickened by the same British rule. As if we had nothing before the advent of Raj. In Tully's opinion Emperors do not quicken their subject's culture. They kill that. Even after leaving India, they left behind their colonialism, though with a changed name. You may call it "Cultural colonialism", "imperial Colonialism" or the "New Colonialism" which continues to destroy our own ancient culture which had survived for thousands of years before the Raj. Where are those nowwhom we could call Hindus. Everybody, by and large, craves to ape the westerner and also derives a sense of pride in this pursuit. In such circumstances what could I do "One sparrow cannot make rain".

The books remained lying with me with no takers. In the heart of my hearts however, I was feeling guilty in not being able to carryout my Master's directives.

After a long time however one day when I visited Dr.T.N.Bhan at his residence at Kashmiri Gate. I found his wife somewhat inclined to become a 'Hindu'. She was a religious minded lady and had also built a Hanuman Temple at the banks of Jamuna.

Her name was Rani and she was the real -sister of Justice K.N.Wanchoo who retired as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. Bhai and I often used to go there for playing cards on Sundays and other holidays. So, I had a long discussion with Rani Bhan, mostly about Swamiji and other related matters of religion. When I told her that I had several books with me which were written by Swamiji and others, all published by the "Peetambra Peeth" she requested me to lend a few of them to her for reading. What else could I desire? I made immediate arrangements to show all my collection to her. She glanced through and then kept a few of them for study. I felt some consolation and satisfaction for atleast a "token" complianceof his wish. That was the only attempt, I could ever make in making "Hindus".

Actually, there were some other reasons as well. From morning till late in the night. I remained busy in my office and returned home dog-tired. on holidays I just relaxed and enjoyed my favorite games, cards, chess etc.

Anyway, Swamiji must have known everything about my inability and so he never reminded me abut the progress of this mission, although I visited him many time thereafter.

PARADISE LOST - My Dark days and the immortal couplet

Swamiji had warned me several times that this "Shakti

Sadhana" is a path of thorns and though it leads to the garden of roses, it had many pit falls. A slight mistake could lead the Sadhak to his doom, even after he had attained "Sidhdhi". "Sidhdhi" deserts the Sadhak for ever in a minute, if he ever tried to misuse it, intentionally or even unintentionally. He therefore insisted that we must all remain very cautious and careful. He impressed upon us one more fact and that is, like all mothers, our "MOTHER", though gets pleased with us in a moment, also gets angry in a minute and then "Her wrath" becomes intolerable for "Her" children i.e. her devotees.

A couple of centuries back when urdu poetry was still in its infancy, a poet whose Takhallus was "Adam" wrote a couplet which even today scholars consider as immortal and claim that till urdu lasts on the, earth, this couplet would not die. I have read these views myself in several urdu magazines. The said couplet is:

"Sirf ek Qadam utha tha ghalat rah-e-Shauq mein Manzil tamaam umar mujhe dhoondti rahi". Its translation in english would roughly be that only one wrong step on my part was enough to prove disastrous and I could not achieve my goal for the whole of my life. In 1979 Swamiji merged with the "Supreme" the event cast an unbearable gloom on the whole kingdomcf his disciples. (I have deliberately used the word "Kingdom" as I never consider my Guru, less than any other king of the world) And, Yogi, my elder son was not an exception. He cried and, sobbed, and said that he had wanted to have "Maa Kali's mantra" from Maharajji, but since he was no more, who else would give it to him. I sincerely do not know, what actually happened to me at this moment. As if all my faculties had gone grazing and I told him not to cry. I would give him that same Mantra, which was given to me by Mai herself in my dream. I hadheard from several devotees in Datia that they got their Mantra from their fathers only and that fathers were supposed to be fully competent and entitled to impart such mantras to their sons. Only that considerationweighed with me at that time. It was coupled with one mroe consideration that in the event of my death, this "Mantra" would go out of my family for ever and which I did not want. I failed to distinguish between the "Mantras" written in the "Books" and one that was given by "Maa" herself. The former as I now realise, could be imparted by fathers to their sons but not this one.

It did not occur to me then that our ways of worship are individual-based,, unlike Muslims' and Christians' who pray all at one time together I completely failed to realise that it was a sacred "trust" and was given to me exclusively for my rendering only.

Mantras as a rule, are considered "sacred" and only its giver and taker knows about it and no third person. But, as already stated, my entire wisdom had deserted me and I gave "Mantra" to Yogi. The result was, as I realised very late, "Maa" became angry with me. Whatever spiritual energy I had received from Swamiji was totally sapped and I became absolutely blank and bankrupt. When I spread my "aasan" to meditate, my rosary broke down. I took another one and that too, I found had broken down. When I tried to meditate without the rosary, I found as if mosquitoes and bed-bugs were stinging me and I could not concentrate even for five minutes. I became restless. "Maa" stopped coming to me in my dreams though before that I used to have her Darshan every now and then. As the adage goes, "Mulla ki daur masjid" I ran to Datia.

There I asked almost everybody who mattered, the reason for all this and for a possible solution but, alas! none could help me. During this stay as also on my previous stays, I had stayed in the room adjacent to the well. One day, while I was coming out of that room in the morning (there were three steps only). I suddenly missed my step and fell down badly spraining my right wrist. It appeared to me as if some force had literally pushed me to a nasty fall. An angel of a man, by the name of Nav Garahyaji was passing by that way at that mment. He came down running and lifted me up and then for atleast a fortnight or more he kept coming to me everyday -till my wrist became alright. He massaged my swollen wrist with mustard oil, applied turmeric and some medicinal leaves and then bandaged it. Later on, I learnt that he was actually an expert in this art. Chatting while massaging, he revealed one day that Maharajji had taught him how to make a horoscope by reading a man's palm only. At my request he thus made my horoscope. After making it, he suggested that I should wear a ring with a particular stone to ward off ailments and at my further request, he himself got it made in the city and brought it. I wore it for long and it is still with me. He is a local but a daily morning visitor to Peetambra Peeth. It became crystal clear to me then and there that "Mai'' herself had punished me and then she herself had sent somebody to provide relief so that my suffering did not last long. She must have considered that much punishment sufficient for the time being. This was an example of her anger, mixed with Mercy. "Otherwise, who would call her, a mother". These are the traits of a mother's character only. They can't bear their children's suffering. After a couple of days later I again had a fall and sprained my foot. But since Nav Garhiyaji was still treating my wrist, he attended to my foot as well.

These were the manifestations of my "Mother's wrath'' only. Anyway, I became alright within a couple of days but my problem remained unsolved. No comfort, not even "solace" came from any quarter. I became mad and started doing things which no same man would ever do. They are in fact unprintable. I had heard earlier that in this state of mind - people start eating even shit. I can not describe my condition in words. My anxiety was increasing by the minute and I thought my time had come to commit suicide but, which I think, "Maa" did not like. She therefore sent an angel in the form of a human being to bail me out.

PARADISE REGAINED (Happy days return)

This person was Swami Bhagwata Nand. He had taken to saint hood at an early age. He was one-eyed and was an old disciple of Guru Maharaj and often used to come to Datia to pay obeisence and I knew him quite well. There was some function going on and perhaps he had come to attend it. When I saw him, I took him aside and explained my problem and requested for a solution. He listened to me quite patiently, brooded for sometime and then gave a piece of advice to me. He gave me a "Mantra" and told me that by rendering it for sometime, I would be able to please my Guru and if Guru gets pleased "Maa" would automatically be pleased by the way, this also is the essence of Guru Stava Raj "Stotra" which we sing every morning before Guru in the prayer hall. For obvious reasons, I can't quote the Mantra here. After giving this "Mantra" he left for Mathura by an evening train. He has an "ashram" somewhere near the Railway station and gives discourses to large gatherings, he is actually what people call in our parlance a "Katha Wachak" narrating "bhagwat Geeta" "Purans" and other ancient scriptures, explaining to his audiences their significance, their meanings and their import. I Understand he is a highly respected man in Mathura and always remains flanked by his followers. I for one, would never forget his obligation for this kind act and would pray for his long life. Though I passed Mathura several times on my way to Datia and remembered him. I could not meet him mainly because the road by passes Mathura and does not enter the city but now I have decided that next time if I happen to go to Datia by road, I would make it a point to meet him. May God fulfil my desire. May be he had been sent there only for my sake. Who knows? Always mysterious are the ways of Destiny. It was a passing phase, though, but a very bad one indeed to experience. I got a new rosary made at the Peeth itself and started doing the "Mantra".

In course of time I found my imprisonment period had ended and I regained my 'freedom'. Everything started coming back to normal. Only one difference which I noticed was that only Guruji re-started coming in my dreams but "Mai'' rarely. She came only once or twice. One night I saw I was running on the Railway Bridge over Jamuna to reach its middle with the intention of jumping in the middle of the river to commit suicide but the moment I started to take the leap 'Maa' appeared and caught hold of me and said "You fool, what are you doing. Whatever you.haddone was only in a dream. Forget it and go home'' I woke up. Since I had become accustomed to see "Her" every other day. This sometimes really hurts me but then, when I think there is no difference between "Mai" and "Maharaj" I get consolation. I am confident "Mai" has not totally deserted me and some day she herself would start appearing regularly, as before.

Mercy started to flow like a stream and "Darshans" increased day by day. Today as I am writing this. I am absolutely happy and contented. One day She however again appeared in my dream to tell me that she is now going to release me from the never ending cycle of "Births" and "Deaths" and that this was my last birth. This shows that she is no longer angry with me and there might be some other constraints due to which she is not coming to me in dream as frequently as before or Maharajji perhaps had taken over that responsibility. God knows. Even in those days of my agony it did not strike me that the root cause of my Maa's anger was the leakageof her "Mantra" to a "third party" till one day, long thereafter, Indu reminded me that this could be the reason and then only it dawned on me. Thank god, those days of darkness are now over.

A couple of days back I also heard the sad news of the passing away of my sister, Rajjan Didda at Udaipur on the 18th Nov. I have lost a mother in her and my grief in undescribable. However, since the world goes on and these are the ways of destiny I have nothing to grudge. From my calculations she was about eighty eight (88) years old. "We were six" who now are one Tomorrow this "one" may also be substituted by "none" as this "one" would also have "gone" but this is how the "Kaal Chakra" moves on. Of all the offsprings of Bhaiji and Bauaji I am now the lone survivor.

I believe some poetic blood from the veins of my grand father percolated to in my veins too and so I also poked my dirty nose in the realm of poetry. But since neither in Urdu not in English had I any "Ustad" to teach and guide me nor the required knowledge and the time required for this pursuit ended up only as a mere poetaster and could compose only a few "tuk-bundees". However, I take the liberty of enclosing them at the end of this book. Some of them may perhaps be found interesting to the children.

THE FAILED "ANUSHTHAN"

Whenever I saw some devotee doing something "unusual" and asked him what exactly he was doing he replied that he was busy with an "Anushthan". I then went to Maharajji to enquire what exactly an "Anushthan" was and he always gave a curt reply saying "Why do you want to perform one, why should you need to know anything about it and I came back. One day he even confided in me (by pointing out towards the many devotees meditating there at that time) Prakashji you see these people. You have started from where all these would end. You do not know where you stand in our "Seniority List". I became satisfied one of my friends "Sita Ram" about whom I already mentioned earlier, told me that he had read in some scriptures that the kundalini of a devotee whom "Maa" Herself gives her "Mantra" never is dormant but remains "awake" all the time.

He was my friend since boyhood and knew this well and hence I do not doubt his statement. (I am sorry, I have diverted myself from the main topic). One day Swamiji Maharaj appeared in my dream, sitting on his favourite Moondah and I sitting at his feet. He told me

"Prakashji, today I propose to give you everything I have". Hearing this sentence I thought I was in the seventh heaven. So much elated I had never felt in my life but this elation died down soon when in the next breath, he said "But before I give it, I suggest that you may count some further numbers of your Mantra". I asked How many sir? and he replied '7 lakhs'.

The dream ended and I woke up. There was a mingled feeling of sorrow and joy-sorrow because I did not get what he earlier wanted to give and joy because I would get it ultimately when I completed another seven lakhs of my "Mantra". I started making urgent calculations and concluded that one lakh per day would do - fifty thousand in the mornings and the same number in the evening. Thus in one week's time the full quantity would be over from my side. And I started in right earnest - from that very day itself. I was relentlessly pursuing my goal and five days had thus passed. On the sixth day however, Maharajji again appeared and told me "Prakashji, this would not do. Please do this according to the Vidhi" and "Vidhan". My forefathers had not known these "Vidhis and Vidhans" and so I immediately went to the "Peetambra Peeth" for consultations (Remember, those days I was staying in Datia only in a rented house).

I met the Pradhan Acharya, Shri Om Narain and requested him to kindly explain to me everything about Vidhi and Vidhan. He is a knowledgeable person, quite competent in his knowledge. He told me that the vidhan is that first of all one "Mala" of Ganeshji's Mantra, should be rendered. Next, one "Mala" of Batuk Bhairon and then my own "Mool Mantra". The quantity should be the same for morning and evening. A lamp should also be lighted and on no account should it go out till your Pooja is over after seven days. I then started according to this "vidhan". The earthen diva was quite small and needed frequent pourings of ghee to remain lighted. For several days it remained burning all the twenty-four hours. One night however, I started feeling very sleepy.

Strenuous meditation for long hours for several days had made me tired as well. It was perhaps 11.30 PM. I asked my servant Shashi (he was my whole-time servant and slept at my house only) to sit near the diva and Pour ghee at frequent intervals to ensure that it did not go out. When he agreed to take this responsibility I lay down on the floor itself and dozed off. Since I was worried. I soon got up (perhaps about an hour afterwards) only to find Shashi himself sleeping and the diva extinguished. I cursed only my luck, though scolded that fool as well. But, was there any use crying over spilt milk? I went to bed to complete my sleep as there was nothing else to be done at that late hour. As soon as I slept, maharajji again appeared before me and said "Prakashji, aap ka Anushthan fail ho gaya Sahib". He then disappeared. In the morning when I went to the "Peeth" and told my fellow "brothers" what all had happened, Kishan, the son of a very old friend of mine Chandraprakash told me. "Chachaji" why did you not tell me earlier. I would have given you a diva which could last atleast eight hours with one filling and your whole night would have passed. I kept quiet. Did I know that he had such a diva? Anyway, I decided that I would make another attempt. Here I want to emphasise the fact that there was a time when I used to ask Maharajji what an "Anushthan" meant and his pat reply used to be, "What is the need for you to know it" but today he himself asks me to perform the same Anushthan. Is it not strange? I could not make a second attempt as shortly thereafter, I suffered a heart-attack and after an admission to a hospital in Jhansi, I came down to Delhi. The whole-house hold in Datia was wound up. Since I am a fatalist, I believe, it was not destined to happen. Man is helpless before destiny.

When Maharajji gave me that Saraswati Mantra he also noted down in my note-book, a detailed procedure like purifying the aasan, performing Haran Niyas Karan Niyas etc. which were supposed to be the unavoidable part of the rituals of Shakti Sadhana. But, note here his kindness, he told me "Prakashji", I exempt you from doing all this. I know you are a student and will not have so much time to devote to Puja only. You have to study as well. Rendering of this "Mantra" only would give you all the required benefits. However, he gave me a hand-written copy of "Tara Stotrum" and instructed that I should recite it audibly every day during my Pooja. Whether it was in his own hand or he had got it written by someone else. I do not know. He gave it to me since I could only read but not write Hindi.

By that time it had not been published in a bookform. After sometime when it was published he gave me a printed copy as well. Swamiji maharaj also gave a new name to me. He said "Prakashji, hence forth I would call you Prakashnanda". As a token of my regards to him, I used to send him a money-order on the first of every month, as soon as I got my pay. At the bottom of that form, these used to be some space for writing and my patent sentence used to be :

"My most revered Guru Dev,
Sa-adar Charan sparsh

I hope and trust that I continue to enjoy you ever-merciful blessings we are all well here. With sadar charan sparsh, yours obediently.

Prakashnand.

He was also fond of taking "Surti" i.e. lime, mixed with a little tobacco placed on the left palm and rubbed by the right hand index finger. Several times, quite humorously he used to say in some language, other than Hindi "jou surti nahi khaayi oo Babu kaise kahlaayi". These are not the actual words he spoke but in essence meant that. It was perhaps a saying in Bihar or Kanpur, I would not know. So I also used to send him a tin of "Baba brand" good quality tobacco by a parcel and he used to appreciate this gesture. Several times he mentioned this fact to me saying that the quality of the tobacco was indeed good. This practice continued for a long time.

A MIRACLEOUS CURE (Seeing is believing)

After my marriage, Bhai Sahib invited Girija to visit him for a change. At that time he was working as a district Inspector of Schools and his head quarters were at Tickamgarh. Girija went to Tikamgarh. Bhai Sahib had a spacious bungalow there, by the side of a lake and with an army of servants, she enjoyed that trip very well. The bungalow served both as his office and residence. However, as ill luck would have it, she got an attack of Arthritis. Bhai Sahib called an Allopath (a Muslim gentleman) who treated her. But, she started having these attacks at regular intervals. Luckily she had brought with her, the prescription of that Doctor, so whenever such an attack took place. I took it to a nearby chemist and brought the mixture and she improved. I still remember some of the main medicines in that mixture were "Soda Salicylas, Soda bi-carb, Ipecacentra, tincture cardigo etc. This went on for quite sometime but oneday she started suffering from a very severe attack both her hands and feet swelled. I brought a vaid for her Ayurvedic treatment since Allopathy had failed to provide relief. Her suffering went on increasing day by day. She just could not sleep for whole nights. I wrote to Bhai Sahib to see if he could treat her with homeopathic medicines. He came down to Delhi immediately and started his treatment but still with no success. "Marz barhta gaya jun jun dawa ki". She could no longer bend her fingers. She remained lying on the bed all the time. I helped her to the toilet and it looked as if she would become a perpetual invalid. Crying out of extreme pain and waking whole nights was indeed a pathetic sight. When Bhai and I left for our respective offices ladies from the neighbourhood, Mrs.Dewan, Mrs.Khosla, Mrs.Prem particularly used to come to give her a sponge bath, changed her clothes combed her hair and tied her pony tail, sprinkled powder on her body etc. I could not withstand her pain any longer and so, on a saturday, I took a night train and reached Datia early next morning to meet Maharajji for his blessing. When I described her condition to him, he said that only the day before a Vaidji had come to him. He had made a prescription for arthritis and had also given some pills for trial. He said that I should take those pills and try. He further advised me to give her a cup of "Kheer" a preparation of milk boiled with garlic (ek pothi lasson). Which contained only one pod. I was never before so rude to my Guru but that day, in my desperation I told him rather curtly that medicines had already been tried but nothing concrete had come out and that I did not come here for medicines but for blessings only. At that time he was standing at the edge of the chabutra just adjacent to the place where even now water is kept for drinking purposes of the devotees. While I was standing down on the floor, in front of him. I caught hold of his feet and said "Maharajji I would not loosen my grip and would continue to hold your feet till you give your blessings and I made my grip tighter. He then started telling me "Bhai, beemari ka ilaj to dawa hi hoti hai" aap ilaj kareeye but, desperate as I was, I said "nothing doing" Sir, you must give her your blessings. He then became serious and said "Meri Poonji kharch karwana chhahte hein aap, Alright". I was already accustomed to this sentence when Baba Madhava used it though with an adjective "saley" (maharaja never used such words). I replied that I had nothing to do with his reserves nor had I any intention to draw on them. That was his concern. My concern was only to get his blessings. I looked at my watch. It was 10 A.M. I had to catch a train at 12 Noon for Delhi and I was naturally in a hurry. I was waiting impatiently for his word and that very moment he broke his silence and said "Achha, jaaiye sahib" I bowed in thanks and reverence and left for the station. Boarded the train and reached Delhi around 9.30 P.M. When I rang the door bell, I was unbelievably surprised to see Girija opening the door. On my asking, she told me that since morning at about 10 A.M. there was no pain in her hands and feet and that she could walk easily.

The pain had gone that very day and the swellings completely subsided in a couple of days later. She restarted all her house hold chores and no further help was then required was it not a "miracle"? Not only that Girija lived for about twenty-five more years thereafter but no further attacks ever took place. Her death also occurred due to kidney failure and blood cancer-but not due to Arthritis.

Only god knows how much spiritual power he might have spent from his "reserves" to cure Girija - "Seeing is believing".

Maharajji had earlier told me that saints store their powers derived through meditation for long hours and that was actually "Siddhi" and do not "spend" it. However, a stage comes when this starts overflowing and then they use that "over-flow" only for the benefit of human beings as was done by Guruji and also by Baba Madhavanand in my case. Perhaps, by that time this "over-flow" might not have started and so he drew on his reserves to perform that miracle. He taught his disciples different things for example, to one Shri Nav Garhiya he taught how to prepare a horoscope by reading one's palm only, to one Shri Babulal Gupta he taught how to make a "Tantric Panchang". He is still doing it for the last many years, even though it is supposed to be a very difficult exercise, to one Shri Rattan Singh, he taught how to cure an "enlarged spleen" through some "Mantra" only. Rattan Singh has given some demonstration also of his skill. To "Murhiya", now a Poojari at the temple, he taught how to cure a patient of his pain s and other troubles by taking over that ailment on his own self temporarily and getting the other rid of it. One day, I also had a very severe attack of renal colic. My old friend Chander Prakash took me to his house for attendance and summoned Murhiya jee. It was quite late in the night. He came atonce, took a glass of water in his hands and charged it with some "Mantra". He then started giving me a spoonful of that water at an interval of fifteen minutes. I still remember, after two doses only I passed a little urine and felt some relief. After another two such doses, I had profuse urination and the pain was totally gone. I slept peacefully throughout the night. He later told me that while

Guruji gave that Mantra to him he had warned him very strictly to use this therepy only very rarely and in very genuine cases otherwise he was sure to lose this power for ever. Since we were friends from the childhood days he had great regard for me and agreed to use his spiritual powers. By the grace of God, all these persons are still alive and are performing their "arts". There were several others as well who were taught thus. To one he taught how to lit a "havan" fire without matchstick, only through the recitation of "Mantras".

This is by no means a complete list but I propose to finish it by giving just one more example. To Master Motilal the librarian of the "Peeth" he gave a Mantra for curing some particular ailments like Murhiya ji, Moti Master also used a glass of water and charged it with that Mantra and gave it to the patient and the ailment was cured instantly. He is reported to have cured several cases. Pt.Surya Dev Sharma, the Administrator of the "Peeth" (Peetha Dhaksha) saw Master Motilal doing this and convinced of the curing power of that "Mantra" requested Motilal to give that Mantra to him also so that he may also use it in the event of Shri Motilal's absence. Master Motilal obliged and Surya Dev started using it.

One day Surya Dev Sharma told me that this did not work in even one case out of the several he tried to experiment upon. But when the same cases were handled by Motilal, everyone was cured. According to him, that "Mantra" was meant exclusively to be used by

Motilal only but not for others. I presume, the others also who were likewise blessed with different "arts" could also not transfer their specialisations. They were perhaps meant for them only.

As I said earlier, Maharajji had studied and understood all the four vedas and from one of them he took out a recipe and gave it to the late Pt.Ram Narain Sharma, the then Managing Director of Baidya Nath Ayurvedic Medicines Ltd. - one of the largest Ayurvedic medicines Manufacturers in the Country Pt. Ram Narain was an ardent disciple of Guruji and used to come from Jhansi practically every week to pay his regards.

He readily accepted it and started preparing the medicine which was known as "Jyotish Mati''. It was supposed to be a panacea for all eye troubles. As a mark of respect for Maharajji, he sent all this to Datia to be distributed free by Guruji and never kept a drop of it for sale in the market. He produced it only in a limited quantity enough for being consumed in Datia only. Maharajji cured many cases of eye-trouble with this medicine.

Later on, he started curing every other ailment with this medicine only-even cases of cancer. This practice is, fortunately, continuing till today and is benefitting hundreds of needy persons. The point to be noted here is that the same bottle which Guruji used (and thus touched also) is refilled when only a limited quantity is left in it and thus its action remains intact.

Drop, only one, of it is spread on a "batasha" and distributed to the needy every morning particularly, during the winter season as it is considered a hot medicine. Guruji used to advise the patients to take some cow's milk also to moderate its effect. He also gave a recipe to Master Motilal of another medicine from which pills were made out and given to patients of "bleeding-piles" for immediate cure. Motilal still makes and distributes them to the needy. While in Datia I also had once an attack of this dreadful disease and was immediately cured I can therefore Vouch Safe for the medicine's efficacy.

"The day of the Scorpion' with Swamiji too once whep I was reading Paul Scot, I noticed one of his novels having the heading "The day of the scorpian". Immediately, my thoughts went many years back and I remembered that evening when maharajji who had gone to ease himself in the nearby Jungle (no latrines had been constructed till then in the Peeth itself as those were only the initial stages) that a large black scorpion stung him. He came back. His foot had swollen too much and the pain he had then can only be imagined. When it was suggested to him that a doctor be called from the city to give medicine, he steadfastly refused.

All entreaties in this behalf failed to pursuade him to take some treatment. After the Aarti, however, the then Poojari, made a precipitate from the smoke of those aarti sticks (as mothers generally make kaajal for then infants) and after mixing it with a little clarified butter (i.e. Ghee) made a kind of paste and applied it at the swollen spot. This, however he accepted, though, with reluctance. I was a helpless spectator to all this. I stayed there for about an hour longer than usual. I did not want to leave him alone. After the aarti, the poojari also left for his home. A person by the name of "Hari" used to come to fetch a bucketful of water from the well inside the Peeth itself. When I returned home Bhai Sahib showed some anger for staying there so long, Bhai Sahib was anxiously waiting with food-We used to dine together. Naturally it caused him annoyance but when I explained to him everything he became quiet and also felt sorry. The courage, the patience, the strength to bear that unbearable pain which Maharajji showed in that hour of distress, was absolutely remarkable.

With strength and composure he bore that sting. A thousand praises on him one could sing. Next morning when I went there with the usual thermos of tea, the swelling had somewhat subsided and he was his normal self as usual "I hesitatingly asked in a hushed tone" maharajji, do even saints have to suffer like this, what sin could you commit for which this punishment has been inflicted. He smiled and then said 'Prakashji, one has to account for the sins of the previous births as well. I might have committed some sin in some previous birth for which this punishment."

"Karm Pradhan vishwas kar raakhaa jo jus keen so tus phal chaakhha".

By another day swelling completely subsided and pain had gone. And, thus, ends the story of "The day of the scorpion". Once when I went to Datia and stayed in the same old room near the well, I had to share it with one more disciple named "Major Thussu". He was also a Kashmiri Pandit and used to come from Gwalior where he was a "Major" in the N.C.C. He was an ardent devotee of "Dhoomawati Mai". I was sitting in the room quietly when suddenly he went out. It was Maharajji's dinner time and he arranged to obtain just one morsel of bread from that food. He did not eat it there but brought it to the room. He showed it to me and remarked that it was a rare sign of Guru's kindness which others do not get.

I felt a little sad though, that I am not so fortunate as to have that privilege but kept quiet. I did not speak a single word. Next morning when I went to pay respects to Maharajji he asked me "Prakashji, what arrangements have you made for you lunch?" I replied that near the crossing outside there is the Goswami's halwai shop. I will go there and have some 'Puris' "No, today you are my guest and you will dine with me:Shortly thereafter, leaves were spread and food was served. In the middle of the meal Maharajji also said "Aur milega sahib. Finish this" After finishing that much. I infact took some more. These words had actually more meanings which at that moment I could not think of.

1. He must have known (sitting in his room only) about Thussu's deliberate mischief and did not want me to be belittled. After all, I had gone to Datia many times before also but he did not ask me to become his guest. This was a rare occasion.

2. Aur milega sahib did not mean only that extra loaf of bread but also more in terms of money. Nextday when I returned to Delhi and when I went to of f ice I got my promotion order. "More money means more of bread. "And, he knew it".

3. He also wanted to cut Thussu to size because he again reached the place where we were dining. Although in the normal course he could also get a morsel as "Prasad" but this time Maharajji did not offer him even a grain and he went back ashamed because he saw me dining together with him.

SHEIKH SAADI IN MY LIFE

Many years back, I had an occasion to go to Meerut to attend a wedding. In the morning while we, about 10 in number, were waiting for our breakfast, an elderly gentleman, a retired Supt. of Police, surname 'Kaul' was discoursing on 'Destiny' and recited inter-alia the following couplet of Sheikh Saadi, the Sufi Saint :-

Kaar Saaze Ma ba-fiqr-e-kaar-e-ma
Fiqr-e-Ma dar Kaar-e-Ma-Aazar-e-Ma.

I was listening to his talk rather attentively since the subject was of my liking. However, not knowing Persian I could not understand the meaning of this couplet. I therefore, quite unhesitatingly requested Kaul Sahib to kindly explain its meaning in Hindustani. He explained. It meant "Jo mera karta hai, God, usko merey kaam ki khud fiqr hai is liye meri fiqr upne kaam ke liye karna beemari lana hail'. "Kar saaz" means karta, 'Ma' means mera 'Aazar' means beemari, he explained. I atonce took a piece of paper and scribbled it down. I learnt it by heart and since then it has become a part and parcel of my pooja. Till today I recite it every day at the end.

MAA's DARSHAN IN FLESH AND BLOOD

While in Datia, Sagar and I together used to go to the 'Hall of Prayer' or the 'Hall of Fame' or as they call in Hindi ''manipur Dham' where Swamiji's statue has been installed. The time was five P.M. when 'Guru Vandana' is held every day. I used to take some sweets in a card board box to be distributed to the devotees present there. After its distributions the Poojari used to return the undistributed prasad to me for distributing it to those who came late and thus could not get it. It was believed in 'Peetambra Peeth' that even gooddesses came to pay obeisance to Swamiji as ordinary ladies and therefore could not be distinguished. Dozens of ladies came every evening. one day, all of a sudden, it, occurred to me that I should try to spot one 'Devi' at least, among them all but it was a very difficult proposition. A divine inspiration suggested to me that while returning if a lady touched me or her clothes touched me, I should presume that lady to be 'Devi' in human form. We used to sit against the wall and facing Swamiji straight. There was only one door meant both for entrance and exit. As soon as people enter, they find on their left, a portrait of Maha Lakshmi before whom they bow and then they come directly before Swamiji's statue where they bow. After that they move to the right and also bow before the two other portraits fixed there. The last one is of 'Maha Kali'. After bowing before 'Maha Kali' they passed us on the way to the exit door, while passing thus some of them stopped before us to receive their share of 'Prasad' from me. While receiving 'Prasad' any lady or her clothes could touch me and I would know (according to my newly acquired whim) that she was 'Devi'. To Sagar also, I confided this.

One day, a lady, after paying obeisance returned to the exit gate to go out, but then suddenly stopped. From there she had a good look at me. She smiled at me and atonce ran towards us to have her 'Prasad'. This lady was very fair complexioned and wore ornaments from head to foot combined with a beautiful silken saree. She took her 'Prasad' and went away. Both of us concluded, that she was definitely 'Maha Lakshmi' in human form because, never before had we ever seen her nor for that matter, thereafter. She must have descended from somewhere.

DHOOMA WATI MAI

One day, Swamiji told me that he had gone somewhere and there, while talking to his Maa (Peetambra Mai) another lady dropped in and asked Peetambra Mai "Who is he, I don't know him''. These words were spoken by her in English only. When he returned, he atonce decided to build a temple for her and since then this temple is there.

Dhooma wati mai is projected as an angry and frustrated lady, very old, wrinkled face, droopping breasts and wearing a skirt in the European style. Maharajji had ordered that Her face should always remain covered and should be opened only at the time of the aarti morning and evening. He also advised those whom he gave Her 'Mantra' to render only one 'Mala'. Her main sphere is that She creates a row among the enemies of Her devotees and they die fighting among themselves, thus keeping Her devotee away from harm's way. She is also supposed to be the goddess of death. This last I concluded later on when She appeared before me.

Those days I was staying with Giani at Bidar (in Karnataka) where he was then posted. He had a spacious house and he was kind enough to place one room at my disposal exclusively for my use. I had set up my Pooja in that room and used to meditate for long hours at a stretch sometimes, even for whole nights. This I could do because there I was all alone. Suddenly however for no obvious reason, I started praying to Maa that I did not want to live any longer and that She should give me leave ("Chhutti''). For a fortnight or so there was no response from 'Her' and my prayers continued. Then one day I saw a dream in which I saw that I was sitting with some friends of mine and talking to them. Suddenly, a European looking lady appeared from behind and told my friend in "Hindi as Europeans generally speak. She spoke thus "Yeh theek kaita hai (for kahta) per Hum abhi iski chhutti (for chhutti) nahein karega'' and had a smile on Her face. In appearance She looked like a lady of about 50 to 55 years of age, very healthy, rather fat and wearing a black frock. Had I been an artist, I could have painted Her picture exactly. She then disappeared and I woke up. After wards when I went to Datia and discussed this dream, with my senior guru - Bhais they were all of the opinion that She wants something to be done by you before your death but I still did not know what that work could be. Today, when I am writing this book I think this is what maa perhaps wanted me to do. I am really happy if this is the case because this way I am actually fulfilling Her desire. Incidentally, all my prayers were made to Maha Kali only and I had nothing to do with Dhooma wati Mai as such, but it seems Maa Kali must have talked to Her, since, probably, it was her domain.

So I conclude that Dhoomawati mai must be the goddess of Death also. I then totally stopped praying for my death.

DHOOMAWATI MAI”s DARSHAN

One day, as we were sitting in the same hall after the 5 PM. “Vandana’’ an old lady, with grey hair, wrinkled face, failing eye-sight, drooping breast wearing dirty clothes and a long stick in hand having all the ingredients of a “Dhoomawati Mai’’ after paying her obescience before maharajji, straight away came down in front of us “obviously” for receiving her share of “Prasad” from me. She was so near to me that while giving her Prasad. I tried to touch her feet. But, the moment I made the attempt, she took a step backward and became angry. She then bared the right side of her waist thereby taking her sari down by just an inch or two and showing a white roundish scar said “You see, I have been branded. Do not come near me, keep distance, do you understand? and having already taken the “Prasad” went away, perhaps for ever, since we never saw her again. Both, Sagar and I were convinced that she could be none else except “Dhommawati mai’’. The reason for her anger also was known to us. How? Only a day or two back, Sagar, on the advice of somebody, had performed a pooja and a “Havan” at the shrine of “Dhoomawati” (which is also located in the ‘Petambra Peeth’ premises and while pouring aahooti a fish was also thrown in the “Havan Kund” as already arranged but as soon as the fish was thrown in the fire, it jumped out of the fire. It was alive while the Poojari, Shri Doorbar and all the persons present (including Dr.Yogesh Mishra) had presumed it dead. According to Doorbar & Dr.Mishra the entire Havan had failed and instead of pleasing 'Mai' they had displeased Her. Since then, for quite sometime we started avoiding Her and bowed only from the other side of the "Yagya Shaala".

The fact that her anger was directed only towards Sagar became clear one day when Sagar left for Nagpur and I was alone. The Poojari of the day Her prasad sent to my room some prasad (after Her usual 'Aarti') and with a message that 'Mai' Herself had sent it. I was stunrned, surprised and amazed since 'Prasad' is distributed only to those who are present at the 'aarti' and never sent to anybody's room.

I atonce came out of my room and reached to 'Her' and bowed and then I asked the said Poojari who was by then covering 'Mai' with a big black cloth (as is the practice) the reason of this special favour and he replied rather smilingly, that it was due to some inspiration from 'Mai' Herself while the fact was that he himself did not know why he did that. From that moment onwards I resumed my old practice of bowing before Her whenever I passed by Her Shrine. The temple incidentally fell right on the way while going to the hall for prayers. I understand Sagar has also been pardoned. Mai is after all a Mai and 'Mother' cannot remain angry with 'Her' Children for ever.

MAA KALI

Going to the prayer Hall at 5 P.M. everyday and sitting there for an hour or so after the Vandana with the 'Prasad' on our side, was a daily feature. Next day, or the day after, (I do not remember exactly) a similar incident re-occurred. A lady, not too old and not too young, after bowing before maharajji's statue, went straight to Maa Kali's, portrait, the last in the series (as I have already described earlier). Normally, people pay their respects before these portraits in a standing posture only but this lady, rather unusually, sat below it and then bowed. She then got up and started showing her teeth and Sagar thought she was some mentally deranged lady. My eyes were closed in meditation and when Sagar saw her coming to us, he asked me to get up and leave the Hall atonce. By the time I opened my eyes and started making out as to what all was happening, she had come just infront of me and sat there. Sagar was scared. He was still insisting that we should get up and go. However, that lady by now protruded her tongue (as you must have noticed in all Maa Kali's portraits) and raised her right hand, shoulder. high, her fingers heaven words her full palm facing me in the posture of blessing us. Sagar told me later that he had never seen before, a longer tongue. By this time we were more than convinced that this lady was none else except my own Maa since by this time Prasad had already been distributed and only a very little was left, I offered Her the card board box itself. Before this however, I had already placed my head at Her Feet and She ran over Her hand over my head and back and I was constantly chanting "Maa mein tera beta hoon", Maa mein tera beta hoon". Sagar was a silent spectator. Thus, several other ladies who were perhaps already present there, started closing on her. When Sagar saw the ladies adamant and more and more ladies started gathering, he feared an undue hue and cry in the entry path, he prayed me to get up. I then asked 'Mai's permission to get up. She nodded her head only in affirmation but did not speak since her tongue was still protruded and while she remained sitting we left the room. Later on I scolded Sagar for his misbehaviour. I did not know how much time she took to come to her normal self. In such cases, the normal practice is that the lady is offered some sweets and a glass of water when she returns to her normal self. I taught this to Sagar for his future guidances but this occasion never arose again.

Many times in my life, while meditating before Her portrait I had fondly wished if SHE could bat Her eye lid to convince me that there was life in that portrait and that it was not a paper picture only. But, it never happened. How could it after all? That day, however, SHE fulfilled all my life's desire and quite spontaneously however the following words of a "Doha" (from Ramayan) fell audibly from my lips "Prabhuki Kripa, bhay sub kaju", "Janm Hamar suphel Bhaya aajoo". A life became fruitful. In what words can I thank 'Maa' for Her ever merciful blessings?

A UNIQUE DREAM

Today is the 25th December 1996 and Christmas Day. This automatically reminds me of Christ How? In those days I was staying with Gyani at Kanpur. As I said earlier I was a chronic patient of dudenal ulcer unfortunately it became 'active' for some reasons and started giving me lot of pain in my stomach besides vomitting. I was persuing sleepless nights. It is however a common phenomenon that howsoever a man may be ill and crying in pain all night in the hours of the morning he gets to sleep for an hour or so. This happened with me also. One night I first got to sleep in the morning hours in agony. I saw a dream in which I saw that I was standing somewhere when somebody looking like an Indian Christian gently patted me on my right shoulder. When I turned my face back to see who he was, I found a dark complexioned person, healthy looking, wearing a white pant and a white shirt with a black coat and a black tie. When we came face to face with each other he gently told me thus "I know you are in deep agony. Why don't you take recoarse to Jesus Christ for certain cure. You perhaps don't know that each word of his name has a meaning". And he started explaining the meaning:-

1. C stands for Cures
2. H stands for Heals
3. R stands for relieves
4. I stands for Ills
5. S stands for Sufferings and
6. T stands for Tortures

The dream just then ended and when I woke up I found (it may just be psycological) that I was actually feeling lot of relief in my pain. The girl maid-servant brought a cup of tea with two biscuits, and to my surprise I digested them. There was no nausea and vomitting for the whole day. But, it did not mean that I had changed my faith - it remained firm, like a rock - rather firmer in my own "christ". According to Swamiji, ailments and diseases do come but they go as well. It is a passing phase and so we should never lose faith in our "MOTHER".

I was in Jhansi and staying with Yogi in the Civil Lines Area. Nearby was Sagar's bungalow we used to meet everyday. One day I learnt that his father died. His ashes were to be immersed at different places, eg. Hardwar, Pryag, Vrindavan, etc. Sagar was to go to Prayag. He insisted that I should accompany him. The weather was very hot but since his car had an A.C. I agreed. After the immersion ceremony, I also took a bath in the holy "Sangam" where three rivers (Ganga, Yamuna and a hidden Saraswati) meet. For Hindus it is believed to be a very very sacred place. I had never been there before and so this occasion proved to be a blessing in disguise.

BRAIJI's SHARADH

Sagar now wanted to perform his father's Sharadha. He again requested me to join him. Near Nasik, there is a place called

"Triambukeshwar". It is most famous for performing "Shradh". It is an ancient place from where river Godawari starts its journey. People from far off places (particularly from the whole of Maharashtra) come here for that purpose. There are dozens of Pandit and Pandas engaged exclusively for this purpose.

Since morning one would find maunds of rice being boiled for making "Pinds" for Pooja on a mass scale. Sagar had his own family Panda there who had already made all arrangements due to prior intimation sent to him. We reached Nasik, stayed there in a decent Hotel for the night and early morning left for Triambukeshwar by Car which was, I think, roughly about twenty minutes drive. We took our bath from the water of an ancient kund situated there fresh water comes to it from Godawari but nobody is allowed to pollute it by bathing directly in it. Water has to be taken out in buckets and bathing takes place at the banks only. After a bath we sat for the "Pooja When Sagar finished his, I told him, that I also wanted to perform my father's Sharadh to which Sagar readily agreed. I performed the Pooja with interest sincerity and extreme devotion. I felt some how confident that Bhaiji must have felt happy because I felt satisfaction. To be honest, I had never dreamed that I would also ever get such a chance. Near this big hall hundreds of sons together were paying obiescence to their departed fathers and the Pandas were busy from early mornings till late evenings.

There is also an ancient "Shiva Temple" called 'Traiambukeshwar" we went to perform an "Abhishek" but were told by the "Pandit on duty" then that there are two conditions before we could do it. The one was that we should again take a bath from the water of the same holy 'kund' and thereafter we should put on a brand new 'Lungi'. No used clothes could be worm.

He himself gave us new silken lungies (of course against cash payment). We wore them and then performed our 'Abhishek'. The extent of peace and mental satisfaction. I derived there can't just be described. We returned.

BAUAs TARPAN

One day while I was staying at Nagpur with Sagar (He mostly resides there having his own big house) another 'Guru Bhai' turned up. His name was 'Thakur' Badan Singh. He wanted to go to Mahaur a secluded place and renowned for performing "Tarpan" for his mother who had died earlier and wanted Sagar's car for the purpose and also requested him to accompany him. Sagar has never been in the habit of rejecting anybody's request, as far as possible, but that day he was not feeling quite well and so expressed his inability to undertake a long journey. He told Badan Singh to take the car and also provided assistance by way of deputing an employee who was conversant with the place. Sagar told Badan Singh that he could take Bhai Sahib along (meaning me) if I wished. Sagar always addresses me as Bhai Sahib. I readily agreed and accompanied him on this trip. After the whole day's driving we reached "Nan Ded" and passed the night in a Hotel. Next morning, we visited the famous "Gurdwara" of Nan Ded. What a scene? We saw dozens of Sardars whose big and new cars were parked outside, were sweeping the court yard with brooms in their hands.

Some noble person took charge of our shoes and we paid our obeiscience at the Gurudwara. The atmosphere seemed fully charged with spiritualism and there was complete "Shanti" Bhajans, (shabd) as they are called, were being sung in melodious 'Ragas' and it was a treat to watch. Although we wanted to stay longer but since we had still to continue our long journey. We left for our destination. Before leaving however we made some purchases from the stalls set up outside. I bought a 'Kirpana' a copy of book "Sukh Mani Sahib". Badan Singh also bought some such articles. Maharajji used to say that by reading that book also one could attain "Siddhi". Nan Ded Guru Dwara in considered as the second biggest after the golden temple of Amritsar. When we reached there, we found that there was a high mountain with more than a hundred stairs to climb to reach there.

There was a temple at the top dedicated to "Renuka Devi", duly beheaded.

Mythology tells us that "Renuka Devi" was the wife of a Rishi who suspected her fidelity and in rage ordered his sons to behead her. When Rishi's other sons refused to obey their father's, orders, he asked his youngest son Bhagwan Paras Ram to do this job. Paras Ramji complied and beheaded her. This temple therefore does not show the whole of "Renuka Devi" but only the portion under her neck. Down the hill on the ground there is also an ancient 'kund' with stone banks on all sides. Paras Ramji, afterwards came to this tank to perform "Tarpan" for his late mother. Since then, this tank is called "Matre Teerth". I learnt there that a large number of persons from far and wide come there to perform 'tarpan' (offering sacred water to the departed mother) and performing a special pooja meant for the occasion. Pandits are always present there for this purpose. So Badan Singh performed this pooja for his late mother. I was watching it. The moment he finished I asked Badan Singh to let me also perform it for my late mother. When I did it, my inner self told me that Bauji is definitely very happy to be thus remembered. She was a deeply religious lady and had herself believed in all such rituals. I canot describe the satisfaction. I derived as if I had a dream come true. At times, I felt as if Bauaji herself had planned this visit for me so that I could discharge my obligation myself. I think Shyam Mohan also did it once at Hardwar for his mother.

The later part of 'Renuka Devi' legend says that after this incident, the Rishi became so pleased with his son that he told hi m to ask f or a boon Paras Ram then asked the Rishi to revive his mother and make her alive. This was not at all difficult for the Rishi and ‘Renuka Devi’ became alive and normal, but her figure in that temple still shows her only upto the neck. I brought one or two pictures of this ‘Devi to Datia where I was then staying. I do not remember where I was then staying. I do not know where they have gone now.

THE STORY OF VISHNU’s DEATH

One day when I was still in Datia I saw a dream in which I saw I was meditating, sitting on my aasan with a rosary in the hand in the courtyard of Peetambra Mai, just in front of Swamiji’s Samadhi. I suddenly noticed that behind me on my left, hardly four to five feet away, Hanumanji maharaj was also sitting. I did not take any particular cognisance of Hari and continued rendering my Mala. Suddenly, I saw he jumped and in one leap reached me and snatched my Mala, broke it and then disappeared, I found that only three beads were left in my fist which I had been holding tightly. Dream ended, consciousness regained, eyes still closed and I started thinking for its interpretations. I came finally to interpret that out of four, three have been left Bhai Sahib and I had four children each and I thought one of these would be “off”. I had already learnt that Yogi had gone to Nepal by air to attend some official conference. I began to worry about him. God forbid, something might not have happened to the Aeroplane in which he flew etc. etc. our family, like every other family is infact like a rosary. There are many beads each bead is separated from the other and has its own identity and yet, they are all joined by the same string to make it "One Mala".

My next worry was Vishnu, Bhai Sahib's eldest son. I had perhaps learnt (I am not too sure) that he was ill. Indu was also in my mind. She was then perhaps suffering from "Gall-stone" trouble. Anyway, with this exercised mind I went to Peetambra Peeth. I consulted several persons but to no avail. Then I met one Ram Sewak Goswami a retired teacher and an ex-student of Bhai Sahib. He was an ardent worshipper of Hanumanji. I thought he might give me a more correct interpretation to this dream. But, he did not see anything bad in that dream and tried to explain that it was the very temperament of Hanumanji maharaj. Once Shri Ram Chandraji had presented him a necklace which "He" snatched and broke. So there was nothing to worry about but my worry continued.

Some days thereafter I learnt that my dear Vishnu had passed away. I immediately left Datia for Delhi. When I was talking to Vishnu's wife as to how Hanumanji came in the picture in connection with his death, she revealed (I never knew itearlier) that Vishnu had started going to a nearby Hanuman Temple every evening for somedays regularly. Then I realised the significance of Hanumânji and his connection with the dream.

One day Indu left for Datia for Maharajji's blessings for her new-born son Gaurav. He asked Indu "What name have you given to this child" and when she replied "Gaurav" Maharajji exclaimed and said "Gaurav!" Gaurav means greatl" I have already repeatedly said and so I do not need to repeat once more that every word uttered by him had a 'meaning'. It is another thing we understood it or not. Gaurav has come out a shining boy and I have every hope that one day he would actually become "great". It is again to be noted how much affection he has for my family, my own children and then my children's children, the like of which is difficult to see anywhere else. On "Guru Poornimas" when Indu can't make it to Datia, he himself comes to her and makes it sure to show that he was with her. I feel extremely fortunate that all my children and their children too, are still attached to him and continue to remember him and "Mai" everday. May Lord continue this for ever is my solemn prayer.

I was in the habit of taking Pan (beetle leaves) with tobacco besides smoking a full packet of cigarettes in a day. One day when I went to Datia, I was coughing rather badly. When Maharajji saw my condition (red face with cough) he asked me "Prakashji why don't you take my medicine. (the same Jyotish mati one drop spread on a batasha). When I got up to take it, he stopped me and asked whether I smoked or not and when I did reply that I actually smoked cigarettes, he said that this medicine was not to be given to those who smoke. "You give it up before I give you that medicine" My reply was

"This cough would go automatically in a day or two, so I would not give up smoking and I did not have that "batasha". He kept quiet. It was a life-long habit. How could I give it up so easily? But, since he wanted me to give it up, a day did come in my life when cigarettes themselves left me for ever. Now I am also having my daily 'batasha' every day, during the winter season.

To ward off the chinese egression, Maharajji had organised a huge 'Yagya'. Many learned Pandits had been summoned from Varanasi, Jaipur etc. and Sagar's father donated a lakh of rupees for its performance. Full details are available in the "Smriti Granth" (the book published later on by Peetambra Peeth on his anniversary). But that is not material here. Here I only desire to emphasise how much he cared for me and for my family. For the duration of this yagya he had issued strict orders that no lady shall be allowed inside, to see him. These orders were being complied with rigourously when Girija suddenly reached there. She was not aware of these restrictions. When she reached the gate, she was automatically stopped. She protested and insisted that she would enter and meet Swamiji.Seeing her insistence, the guards posted there referred the matter to Swamiji and he said "My orders do not apply to outsiders" who come from far off Girija thus met him. What I mean to say here is that all rules and regulations were thrown to the winds for a member of my family.

One day, while he was sitting on his favourite 'Moondah' with several of his disciples round him, I suddenly butted in. As soon as I bowed, he started talking to me, discussing my problem for which I had gone. This irrtated some others. They were waiting for an hour or so but could not make their requests. While others were still waiting patiently for their turn one person lost his patience and shouted" I have been waiting here for an hour and yet I have not been heard but look at this man. He comes and straight away gets Swamiji's full attention. Is this justice? Maharajji immediately responded by saying "Did your father entrust you to me before dying? His father (meaning me) did that and therefore it had become my special responsibility to listen to him first. The man then became silent. This is yet another example of his extra kindness towards us.

One other day he asked me about the time I devoted to Pooja everyday, I told him "10 minutes Sir". This is too short a period "You should devote more time" I replied that even ten minutes I could spare with difficulty. At that time I had six children in all to attend to, (four my own and two of Bhai Sahib's Asha and Ashok) plus terrible work load in the office which compelled me many times to leave office at 10 P.M. instead of 5 P.M. But, I promised him that after my retirement I would get ample time for this purpose, but again he said by that time my back would bend and other physical disabilities might take over and that this was the right time when I should devote as much time as possible. I kept quiet. I returned to Delhi but this thought started haunting me all the time - the shortness of time I was devoting to meditation.

I then thought of a plan. On a Sunday or some other holiday, I would shut myself in a room and for twelve hours at a stretch 1 would meditate. Girija and the children were supposed to tell anybody who came to see me that I was not in the house. When I did that I was myself astonished how I could pass as many as twelve hours with out a "paan" or going to the toilet or asking someone for a glass of water. It was crystal clear in my mind that some "divine force" was helping me and who that "force" could be except that of Maharajji. So when I next visited 'Datia' and told him now I am compensating for the lost time, he only smiled, but in such a way as if he already knew it. He however patted me on the back, ran his hand over my head and then said "well done carry on prakashji". I had already learnt in my childhood from Baua that my grand father did this exactly for eighteen hours at a stretch. I regret I could not go that far. After all he was a saint. During the "Nav-Ratris". I had made a practice of keeping fast for eight days at a stretch, performed a daily "Havan" and had set a target of 1.25 lakhs of my "Mantra" to count during these eight days. One day when I visited Datia, (during the summer months) he asked me to come during the coming "Nav Ratris" of September.

When I told him of my routine of a fast and a "Havan" and how Girija and my daughters fed me with "Rabri and Puries" made of "Singhara Flour" after the day's fast, he showed some anger and said

"Everything can be managed here also. Please do come "The question of any further pleadings did not arise and I went to Datia as directed. I was again stunned to find that as against my target of 1.25 lakhs in eight days, I was actually counting that figure everyday. I could continue with my "Havan" as well. I however could not continue with my fast since Maharajji never encouraged fasts. After that, when I returned to Delhi I thought I was a totally changed man. I was feeling happiness from within though I can't describe this on paper.

As I mentioned earlier, we were four brothers Bhai Sahib (Pt.Hari Mohan Zutshi) was the eldest, while I was the youngest. At the time of her death, my mother had entrusted me to Bhai Sahib and I must say he did everything possible for us. He never loved me less than his own children and educated me for four years at a stretch in college. I can never forget his obligation. In return, I could do no more than disobey Guru's advice and marry, just to keep his children happy I don't know how far I succeeded.

BHAI SAHIB

He was an aristocrat to the last marrow of his bones, it was always the 'Pears' transparent glycerine soap made in England in the morning. when he brushed his teeth, the tooth paste was either "Gathymoll' or "Kolynos" the best brands in the market - made in England. When he smoked, the cigarettes were 'Gold Flake' made in

England by M/s W.D. & H.O. Wills. And he never bought them in packets but always in "sealed" tins so that their "HoneyDew" flavour remained intact. If, however, the smoke was a "Hookah" tobacco for it would be brought from Lucknow from the most famous firm "Azghar Ali Mohd. Ali" renowned all over the country. Hookah must have a silver nozzle and a whole-time boy to fill and refill the "Chilams". When he went to the school, he was always immaculately dressed. Muslin Kurtas, to be worn during summers were stitched by the expert crafts men of Lucknow. The fineness of their embroidery deserved to be seen only to be appreciated. If it were the summer months, he would return from the school around noon, he had his lunch, then a few puffs at his "Hookah" and thereafter, a little siesta. By 3 P.M. friends started pouring in to whom he would distribute homeopathic medicines. This would go on for an hour or so. Thereafter he would dress up for going to the club. One of his good friends was Pt.Tara Dutt Joshi, a kumaoni and belonged to house of deputy collectors. Almost all his relations were Dy. Collectors under the British Govt.

He also owned a tonga and came daily to pick Bhai Sahib. Aristocrat as he was, he plainly told Tara Dutt that he could not withstand the smell of the horses farting and that of the perspiration of the tonga driver And could only sit on the back seat. Tara Dutt the owner of tonga sat by the side of the driver and faced the music of the bloody horse's fartings.

At the club, he regularly played a few sets of Tennis. Thereafter, he sat at the club table to play a few rubbers of 'Bridge'. By that time "contract bridge" had not been in vogue. The bridge sessions lasted for about two hours. When he returned home and had his dinner some other friend would come to play chess and if they were four-some, another session of bridge would start and would go on till very late in the night. He thus had little time to devote to his wife and children. Card sessions continued even after his retirement though the game changed its form. From bridge to rummy. He was also a nice talker. If there were six persons in a room and talking, and you were standing behind a curtain at the door and listening to their talks, you would find that you were listening his voice only while all others would only be hearing him. Sometimes he used to say when I opened my mouth, "let no dog bark".

This is the true picture of my dear revered Bhai Sahib a man of wisdom, compassion and affection - but now, a part of history only. He was a man of very fair complexion, short statured and a born aristocrat. He was also reputed to be strict disciplinarian. He was first married to "Maharaj Pati" daughter of one Pt.Ganesh Sahai Gurtu and Vishnu was from her. She died while delivering another child and thereafter he married "Shyama" daughter of Pt.Kishan Narain Shivpuri of Lucknow. Both his wives and Vishnu are no more at the time of writing. From his second wife he had two daughters and two sons, Munia and Asha, Shyam Mohan and Ashok. Except for Munia, all are alive by the grace of God. Although, by and large, his life was peaceful, he faced some turbulent days as well when one Sajjad All (or perhaps Sajjad Hussain) a retired P.C.S. officer, belonging to Lucknow, came to Datia as the Chief Minister. He was a man of strong likes and dislikes. Initially when he came, he had become very friendly with Bhai Sahib. He used to come to his house for dinners even but one day when he became angry on some pretext, he threatened Bhai Sahib not only with dismissal from service but also imprisonment. But, Bhai Sahib was not a man to be cowed down. He atonce retaliated by saying "Go ahead" but remember, before you sign my dismissal order your right hand would get paralysed and you would not be physically capable of signing it.

From next day a State-wise agitation started against him. Maharaja Govind Singh of Datia immediately sent for Bhai Sahib and asked him to go to Allahabad to meet Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (one of the most leading lawyers of those days) and get a letter written to the political agent and the A.G.G. (agent to Governor General through whom the princely states were them governed by the British) for the C.M.'s ouster. Bhai Sahib met Sir Sapru, got the desired letter. Immediately on its receipt, Sajjad was transferred and on leaving Datia, a crowd of several thousands greeted him at the Station, with garlands of old shoes. With such disgrace he left Datia. Bhai Sahib knew no harm could ever come to him since "Force Behind" was all along helping him. After all who can ever harm a man who had the full backing of his Guru. The person who succeeded Saiiad Hussain as Chief Minister was an amicable person and atonce befriended Bhai Sahib. Things became normal. When Bhai Sahib retired, several farewell parties were organised by his admirers but the most notable one was one which Swamiji held for him. Choicest snacks from Jhansi were brought. In a short speech. Guruji eulogised his services to the state and thanked god that he was retiring without a blemish. (I had the priviledge of reading that letter, dictated by Sir Sapru on Bhai Sahib's return from Allahabad).

At the time of his death, I was staying at Bidar (in Karnataka) where Giani was posted one night I saw a dream in which I saw Bhaiji coming from somewhere outside and just sitting on a chair lying in the courtyard. When he saw me he asked for Bhai Sahib where is 'Nanna'? Just at that moment Bhai Sahib also entered. "Here I am Bhaiji", Bhai Sahib said. He then asked Bhaiji Whether he still remembered 'Daag's following couplet. "Hosh-o-Havaas, Taab-o-tawan, 'Daag' Jaa chuke ab hum bhi jane wale hein, samaan to gaya". Immediately, the dream ended and I woke up. It was morning time and I asked Giani to get me a ticket for Delhi atonce as I was feeling worried about Bhai Sahib. Since no reservation was available for fifteen days, I had to travel in an unreserved compartment. The weather was extremely hot as the train left Bidar (Bidar itself was cool and pleasant). I had got Indu informed of my coming and when Shyam Mohan asked Indu to inform me to come to Delhi since Bhai Sahib had passed away, she told him that I was already on the train and coming to

Delhi. Since he was cremated that very night (we generally cremate the dead before sunset) I could not see him. However, I duly accompanied his ashes to Gurh Mukteshwar for immersion in the Ganga and I also performed some pooja according to the vedic rites.

BHAI PEAREY

So long as he remained in Dhaulpur I fully enjoyed his love and affection but very soon he left for Benares (now Varanasi) for studies along with Bhai - four years for B.A. and then two more years for his M.A. (in English). Even when in Dhaulpur I found he was a little over-shadowed by the presence of Bhai Sahib, a dominating personality. But this much I still remember, that he was very fond of eatables like "Mangoes" and "rabri" which be brought almost every day, for me and for himself in large quantities. He was married to the daughter of Pt.Pashupati Nath Kaul of Bahraich, who had no son. Thus after his death all his property passed on to Bhai Pearey and his children who are staying there only. Bhai Pearey and Bhabi Pyari both, were magnanimous in their love and affection for me. I was in college then and Bhai Pearey gave me several of his brand new suits, both woollen and silken and I lived like a Prince. I used to visit Dhaulpur often on week ends because Agra was quite near to Dhaulpur - just about an hour's journey. on one such visit I just mentioned to Bhabi Piari curiously that I had no ring on my finger. How many would believe that she immediately went to her room and brought all the fourteen gold rings she had, for me, to choose and take any of them. I chose one and retained it. I did not notice even a ray of anguish on her face. She definitely had a large heart. I kept wearing this for several months and when my desire was fully satisfied, I returned it to her. When I received the news of Bhai Peary's death, I atonce rushed to Bahraich from Delhi and though I could not attend his cremation for obvious reasons, I took his ashes to Kanpur for immersion in the Ganga there. He left three sons and two daughters. All of them are still in Bahraich while the daughters have been married outside. Names of his children are as follows :-

1. Gopal Mohan
2. Sushil Mohan
3. Shash Mohan
4. Rita and
5. Annapurna.

After his death, Rita's marriage was solemnised. I attended it and played my part. On Annapurna's marriage I was at Bidar, a place too far from Bahraich and so could not attend. I was also not in the prime of health those days. However, Bhal Sahib's children attended it to make the occasion a success.

BHAI

My third elder brother was an old patient of 'Peptic ulcer' and inspite of being a law graduate, could not enter the legal profession. He satisfied himself with job in the Army Head Quarters and died in 1956 due to the perforation of his ulcer. Before his death however, I had two premonitions.

One night I saw that while I was standing on the roadside, wearing a shirt and pyjamas and a rubber chappal, just near the Dhaulpur Station, I saw Baua going to the station on a tonga (sitting on the back-seat). As soon as the tonga passed by me and we spotted each other, she asked me to accompany her to Mathura where she was going. I atonce put my hand in the shirt pocket to show her that it was empty and showing it to her said "Baua how shall I be able to return since I had not a single penny in my pocket". On this she just said "Accha, I would then take Anand along". The dream ended and I told Girija that Bhai's life seemed to be in danger. Till that day he had been going to his office regularly as usual and there was no apparent cause for worry. He was having his regular medicines as well. Then again, one night 'Kali Mai' appeared before me with no smiling face as I was accustomed to see. She opened her chest with both hands (in the manner of Narsingh Bhagwan opening the chest of the demon, Hirnkashyap with his nails). On this open chest, 'Maa' showed me the face of a dark-complexioned person with dry curly hair, looking very healthy. When I saw two faces at a time, I started looking up and then looking down. Uptil then She was quiet but when my process of looking up and down did not end, she spoke thus, "This is my son - 'Kritagta Rishi' or perhaps, Kritagya Rishi since both were Sanskrit words, I could not understand the meaning of either. When the dream ended and my eyes still remained closed, I started to workout its interpretation. It occurred to me that "he is my son" spoken by 'Maa' meant nothing else except "Kali ka Beta Kaal'' and Mai had just given me 'Kaal's' Darshan. The supposed function of 'Kaal' is to take away souls and I concluded that he had come only for this purpose. I however did not disclose this dream to Girija lest she might be scared. It was summer season, the weather was very hot and we decided to have our lunch in the middle room of our three roomed flat. Girija spread a straw mat (chataai) and we all (wife and children) started together. Over a window of that room, was a ventilator from which birds could come in and go out. Behind a large portrait hung in that room they had made a nest and were re-aring some new-born chicks. While we were in the midst of our meals, a bird rushed in from outside, struck against the ceiling fan and dropped dead. Girija shrieked and said what would happen to those chicks and that it was very sad. At that stage I could no longer hide the truth. I told her that only last night I had seen 'kaal' and since his function is only to take away souls, it was fortunate that he became contented with only a bird's soul. He could have taken away the soul of any of us. She thus stopped wailing. Next night, at about 11 P.M. Bhai complained of unbearable pain in his stomach and I atonce brought Dr.T.N.Bhan from Kashmiri Gate. He was the same doctor about whom I have already spoken earlier. He examined him, gave him an injection of some pain-killer and advised me to take him to the hospital immediately as he might need an emergency operation. This I did without any *loss* of time. The doctors did want to perform an operation but his B.P. went so low that it became impossible. They made frantic efforts to raise his B.P. One doctor told me that he did not want the patient to die on the operation table itself.

Bhai was now sinking and asking for a draught of ice-cold water every two minutes which I gave him against the medical advice. Doctors attending on him had warned me against giving him anything since it was likely to cause great hindrance in the performance of that operation. What occurred to my mind that moment was that it was impossible for me to bear the sight of my dear brother, dying thirsty with parched lips and constantly begging for it. In my imagination I treated that water as 'Ganga Jal' which is generally administered to a dying person. The last words he uttered were "jeetey raho beta tum ne bahut kiya hai, Bhai Sahib ko taar de.ke bula lena take wo apne bachchon ka kuchh aur intzam kar lein. Ab mein yeh zimmedari nahi utha sakta''. And just a few minutes thereafter, breathed his last. Bhai Sahib, in those days was staying at Calcutta with a friend "Mr.M.S.Jain, a business man. He had already retired from service.

On receiving the telegram he caught the first available flight and was in Delhi the next day. Bhai Peary also received the intimation and rushed to Delhi and thus this story also ended.

MUNIA

(Her Photograph, in her mother's arms is still available with Ashok and if I could lay hands on it would be printed in this book.)

Munia was a tiny tot (hardly 4-5 years) when I had gone to the college for higher education. But I used to go to Datia during the summer and other vacations. So, during those days I could have a close look at this child. In the mornings when I took my bath and sat for my pooja she would atonce take her own bath and with just a towel wrapped round her waist would come down rushing to me, sit in my lap and remained sitting in my lap till I finished my Pooja and had got up. No child of her age could remain quiet continuously for an hour or so but she was different She generally sat quietly by that time I had no portrait of "Maha Kali" and so I was still using my old one, that of Vishnu Bhagwan's fascimile of the one used by Baua all her life. This was given to me by BhabiPiari. Lord Vishnu, in this portrait had a slightly smilingly face. So, munia, who must have observed it carefully sometimes, asked me one day "Chacha, kya Bhagwanji aap ko dekh kar hans rahe hein" and then I would only quietly kiss her though not speaking for obvious reasons. These words are still engraved on my heart and shall remain so for ever. I have a continuous hunch that because of her extreme affection for me, she has taken her present birth as one of my grand daughters. I have not revealed this secret to anyone so far. Although all my grand children love me, one more than the other, yet there is something special in her love which only I can perceive.

The extent of her attachment towards me was too immense to be described. Practically every mother scolds her children for something or the other. Bhabi Sahib was no different but the child concerned was. One day, when Bhabhi Sahib scolded her, rather hardly, she sobbed and in that state told "Ammaji hum yahan pitne nahin aaye hein jab hum barey they, hamara apna ghar tha aur usme ek ped tha. Hum dal se roti khate they par jab hamare achche din aagaye to subzi bhi khane lage. Hum apne ghar chale jayenge". This clearly indicated that she remembered her past birth and gave a further proof to our theory of transmigration of souls". Bhabhi Sahib did not appear to have taken her seriously and simply laughed it off. An year or two thereafter, I joined service in Delhi and so the question of my going to Datia for the 'Summer Vacations' stopped altogether and I became cut off from my dear Munia. I however, have a hazy idea that she was sent to Jhansi to stay with her 'Maasi' the younger sister of Bhabhi Sahib, (I am however not quite sure). It was there that she fell ill and died. Her death reminded me of Tagore's Pathak Chakravarty for whom the "holidays had come it was time for him to go home". For Munia also the holidays seemed to have come and she also went home as already warned by her. She might be around ten years only. Bhai Sahib sent us a letter, the opening sentence of which was "My dear

Anand and'Prakash, my munia is no more ... later on, I wondered why he did not write Prakash your Munia is no more. I loved her no less than him and was justified to think that way." We left for Datia atonce and tried to console Bhai Sahib and Bhabi more particularly Bhabi Sahib. No amount of consoling could relieve the shock which was absolutely unbearable. The result was that Bhabi Sahib actually could not bear it, fell ill and died within about two months thereafter. We again had to rush to Datia to Console Bhai Sahib. Imagine, two tragedies and that too within a span of two months. Thoroughly unbelievable. But this is how the world goes on. Bhai Pyare took the little children (Asha and Ashok) to Dhaulpur for bringing them up. Shyam Mohan later went to Jhansi for his college education and stayed with his Maasi. After graduating from Jhansi College, he came to me and joined a college for his M.A. (in English).

MAHARAJJI's PHOTOGRAPH

FOREIGNERS AT PEETAMBRA PEETH. The memorable photograph. Oneday, in Delhi, I was talking to Girija and the subject was maharajji. During these talks I just told her that Maharajji seems to have grown old and may leave us any day. In that case what shall we show to our children who our Guru was. By that time he never seemed to have been photographed and as such there was no photograph available. Girija suggested that next when I went to Delhi, I should take a photographer along with me and take a photo. But it meant double expenses which, at that time unfortunately, was difficult to afford. Then she suggested that I borrow a camera from some friend and do the job myself. This suggestion I brushed aside on the ground that I did not know how to operate it how to adjust its frame and it would only mean the wastage of a photo film. The discussion ended and the matter was forgotten. Now observe the miracle. After a few days I went to Datia (totally forgetting the photograph) and found Maharajji meditating on an aasan at exactly the same spot where his sandles are now kept. As soon as I bowed and said the usual "Namo Narain Maharaj". He started talking about some foreign lady. He said, "Prakashji, some days back a foreign lady had come here. She was very learned, but had certain doubts about certain matters and so was advised to come to India for necessary clarifications. She first went to Varanasi to consult some top Pandits there but none could satisfy her. She was then advised to go to Jaipur but there also she did not get what she wanted. Ultimately she was directed to come her. "Prakashji, I had a very long discussion with her and ultimately she left fully satisfied. Do you know what she did next ? She had brought a camera with her and she took my photograph. Not only that, she also sent a copy of it to me...and raising his legs a bit, took it out from under his aasan and asked me "Do you want? I atonce fell on his feet and told him what I had already been talking to Girija.

Smilingly he said "Take it Sahib and I brought it to Delhi. He already knew I wanted his photograph and so manipulated the whole thing thus. 'Anter Yaami!' Subsequently, I got several copies made out of it and distributed to whomso ever asked for it. Two or three perhaps are still with Suresh, Bari didda's son now leading a retired life at Bhopal. One copy duly made into a large painting is hung in the Prayer Hall. I gave one to Sagar and he is still using it. Every member of my family is its proud possessor. A fascimile is being printed on the first page of this book. The original is still with Indu in her Pooja.

Not only this particular lady had come. Many times I saw foreigners coming to the Peeth though some of them came just as tourists I have seen foreigners buying books from the Peeth's library and studying them. Sometimes some general ones came particularly to talk to Maharajji and I was also a witness sometime. One day, they came in a group of about four or five. The weather was extremely cold and they were wearing woollens from top to bottom and yet feeling cold, they sat before maharajji who was wearing only a cotton cloth, unstitched and only wrapped around his body. They perhaps were surprised to see this old man almost naked and yet not feeling cold. One of them could not resist the temptation of questioning him and asked 'Sir, do you not feel cold on this wintry morning'. Maharajji promptly replied "While you have covered your entire body with these heavy woollen, (layers after layers) why have you not covered your nose and ears. Just as you do not feel cold in these parts of your body, so do I not feel cold in entire body. The foreigners became speechless. What else could they say?

One day, another learned foreigner came to discuss some points with Guruji and then asked "Sir, I want to know the difference between the 'Bhaqti Marg and 'Gyan Marg' but in a nut-shell, may be, one sentence only. Probably he was in a hurry to go. Maharajji replied "The same which is between the heart and the mind". The visiter left completely satisfied. I presume, he must have already had some knowledge about both these margas and just wanted some clarity.

When Indu was appearing for her B.A. Exam, she told Girija in my presence perhaps that she was in a group of four girls who were competing with each other and the matter ended then. I forgot all about it. However, one night Maha Lakshmiji appeared in my dream I saw her sitting just in front of me and the hand on Her raised knees. She was loaded with ornaments from top to toe. She was wearing a gold ring, studded with gems and three lines were protruding from that ring making it look like letter 'E'. So, quite curiously, I asked 'Maa' what it meant since I had never seen such a ring in my life. She replied "It is all a question of interpretation. It could mean third position, could mean third division as also 'Elimination'. She then disappeared. Later on, when the matter was discussed with Indu, she perhaps confirmed that her three other co-students had been eliminated. The dream came true. Indu topped her class.

One night I slept in anxiety. Girija and I had a normal quarrel in the evening about our financial position and I had become quite agitated in complaining. That night 'Maa' again appeared and standing towards my head, started childing me thus "You fool, have you lost all faith in Maa? You want money. I will give it to you but not today. Tomorrow". SHE then disappeared. Not only that I did not get it 'tomorrow' but it took me full ten years' wait to get from the day of this dream. All these ten years I remained patiently waiting and waiting, listening to the constant remarks of Girija due to her constant worry about her daughter's marriage. maharaj had also used this sentence several times with me "Prakashji, have you got no faith in Mai? This is disgraceful". He again said this when I went to seek his blessings for Indu's marriage I had actually been forced to go there by Girija. Maharajji became very angry and asked as to why I wanted to interfere in Her affairs. It was Her Job and SHE knows what to do and reminded me of Her name, Raj "Rajeshwari" so everything SHE would do, would be as 'Queens' do... indirectly hinting at a lavish marriage and that is wha t it turned out to be later I used to be consoled by Maharajji but the effect was only temporary. Rest of the time when I was with the family I had to listen to those caustic remarks unendingly. I must confess, though I had full faith in 'Mai' these remarks had also left their impressions on my mind and several times I slept in anxiety. On one such night, I again saw 'Mai' asking me the cause of my worry. I told Her that I had no money at all with me though I had two daughters to marry. At this, 'Maa' again addressed me a 'Moorkh' (the off-repeated word of Maharajji) and asked "Do the wealthy persons keep all their money. You have also a similar cashier (meaning her self only) who would do everything when the time comes 'She then disappeared and I never felt more re-assured than at that time. And in reality when Indu was married, many persons told me that they had not seen such a lavish grand wedding for years in our 'biradari'. I was a Sales Tax Officer then and the businessmen of my ward sent a fleet of cars to park at my temporary residence taken for this marriage at Sunder Nagar. The baraat was made to stay in a five-star Hotel - every room provided with a telephone, waiter and all other conveniences.

THE STORY OF Mrs. RAM MURTI

Bari didda's third son. Suresh, after having retired from Police has settled in Bhopal. Both he and his wife Vijay Lakshmi are ardent disciples and go to Datia very often and stay there for long periods. Thus, whenever I happen to go there, I generally find them and have long chats. Every time he met me, he insisted that I should accompany him to Bhopal from Datia itself. I used to make promise that I would visit him one day but could never do. One day he caught hold of me and made me swear that I will definitely visit him. I knew both of them had great love and affection besides regards for me and considering that a promise was made at such a sacred place as Shri Peetambra Peeth, I went to Bhopal with prior intimation to Suresh to fulfill my promise.

There I found that Vijay Lakshmi had formed a society of some old ladies of her Mohalla and every week they used to meet for Bhajans and keertans, by rotating the place. That particular day it was scheduled to be held at Suresh's house. All the ladies arrived and with the accompaniment of a harmonium and Dholak they started their bhajans and kirtan. Although, it was strictly a ladie's affair, Suresh took me also there for sometime. After the function was over 'Prasad' started being distributed I came back to the drawing room and sat on a sofa lying there. What I saw then was something unusual. When all the ladies had left one of them, came and sat at my feet. She caught hold of my feet and started sobbing like a child. When I asked her the reason, she said that she was an unfortunate lady. She had been roaming about hundreds of temples in Andhra Pradesh but had failed to find a single person whom she could make her Guru. Eight years had elapsed. In Andhra Pradesh, there is a peculiar custom. The ideal match for one's daughter is her real maternal uncle. She was not getting one for her daughter. Her own daughter-in-law had not been able to deliver a child. Her husband was so strict with her that he would have never allowed her to go out of the house, according to him, ladies of decent homes do not thus go. When I listened to her full story of woes and sorrows, I advised her to make my own Guru, as her Guru, keep his photograph in her pooja and perform his aarti with an incense stick. She then requested me to give her a copy of his photograph. When I returned to Agra from Bhopal, I asked Yogi to get me a few copies made. Yogi not only got those copies made but also was kind enough to despatch them to Suresh to hand over one copy to Mrs.Ram murti (whose name I got to know after wards). She did as she was bid. Within three days (perhaps) as Vijay Lakshmi told me later, she saw a dream in which she saw me having a torch in my hand and showing her the whole "Peetambra Peeth complex, including the one which you can see only by climbing some stories in the Shiva Temple and where Shudanyas- (His different manifestations like Aghor, Neel Kunon, Bain Dev, Tat Purush, Sadhojeet, etc.) of Lord Shiva, are installed. As soon as she woke up, she ran to Vijay Lakshmi to tell her all about the dream. Vijay Lakshmi told me that her description of the Peetambra Peeth was so correct and accurate that it seemed she had visited Datia before. After a few more days she saw Maharajji himself in her dream. Not only that Maharajji also gave her a Mantra for rendering. She has since then been rewarded in every sphere of her anxieties, she got a grand son, her daughter got married to her maternal uncle according to Telegu Custom. She passionately wanted to pay a visit to Datia and I had told her that one day Guru Maharaj would himself call her and would also send a vehicle, for the purpose. She was all the time insisting that her husband would never permit it. However, note the miracle. One day her brother came in his official car. He was going to Gwalior, perhaps and Datia fell on the way. He asked her to accompany her to Datia and her adament husband easily permitted her without any objection. Thus, Guru Maharaj called her to Datia as well. Since then, she has been accompanying Vijay Lakshmi several times. Now, (perhaps due to her husband's retirement) she has left Bhopal for settling down in Andhra Pradesh - their original home.

I can't help believing that I was actually sent to Bhopal for this purpose in the hottest month of the year. I had actually fainted at the Bhopal Rly. Station itself, having come out of an air-conditioned compartment to that unbearable heat. Anyway, all was well thereafter. She later caught hold of a copy of my photograph and keeps it still in her Pooja and considers me till date, her own "Chote Guru" she sincerely be lives that all her desires have been fulfilled through me only and holds me only responsible. Unfortunately, she fails to realise that it was due to the Ornni potent Maharajji and nothing else. But, how to convince her? Any way, she is very happy and contented today.

THE STORY OF INDU's MARRIAGE

The day Indu became a lecturer in the Mata Sundri College in Delhi, Girija started discussing with me about her marriage. Frequent transfers in service were not to my liking and so I had not favoured the idea of her joining the I.A.S. All her friends were appearing and ultimately had cleared it also. She was perhaps the brightest of them all and there was every hope she would have also done it. The frequent transfers in that service coupled with the problem of finding a suitable match thereafter made me stop her from taking the exam.

And, above all, the fact that Maharajji never wanted girls to enter service, deterred me from doing so. He always believed that girls were "Ranis" and not servants. When madhu wanted service and went to him for blessings he plainly told her so. When Madhu told him that Indu was already in service he said "She is not a 'servant' but a Master'. According to Girija, boy of other profession would not suit her. During summer vacation, while she would be free and would like to go to some 'Hill-Station' her husband might not get leave etc. After considering all the pros and cons of the matter, she finally came to the conclusion that only a lecturer would suit her. She must have then prayed for it, I do not know, but her prayer or wish, whatever you may call it, was granted. She asked me to search for such a boy and insisted that unless I wandered from place to place to search one. I would not succeed. According to her, the girl's father had to change several pairs of shoes in this pursuit and then only one got a good match. By sitting in the drawing room and playing cards only, as I did, would never get us a boy. My only reply used to be that in the drawing room itself the proposal would be finalised. I won't have to go anywhere. And, this became a regular subject for our frequent heated arguments.

Now see the miracle. A gentleman, named S.P.Marwah who was a lecturer earlier, had passed his combined Services Exam and was posted as a Sales Tax officer (on his first posting) and coincidentally was placed under me for training.

He was handsome, wiry, and an amiable boy. He started coming to my house, to play cards. He used to address me as 'uncle' and Girija as 'Aunti'. One day Girija asked him if he had any lecturer in his erstwhile college who could be considered for Indu, he replied that there indeed was one and a good friend, he promised to bring him some day, to our house where Girija could see him personally herself. So, one day when he came, he brought a boy. His name was Kuldip Narain Masaldan. He belonged to Lucknow. His father was a retired officer in the U.P.Govt. and his uncle was the Vice-Chancellor of Jodhpur University. The boy himself, was very fair complexioned with chiseled features. We saw the boy, liked him and the proposal was finalised in the drawing room itself. He wrote to his parents to send his horoscope to us for tallying. Indu, getting a lecturer in English in the same university in Delhi without my breaking even one pair of shoes in the pursuit'. Immediately on its receipt, I took both the horoscopes to Datia for my Master's approval. It was early morning as usual and he was sitting on his 'Moondah'. Immediately on seeing me he said "Prakashji, what have you brought? And when I replied "two tevas, Sir", he smiled and commented that I had used the most appropriate word "Tewa". Any way he asked me to wait for sometime as his "Jyotishi" was about to come. I went to meditate with my Mala and after a few minutes only the said "Jyotish" arrived and Maharajji called me. This man turned out to be a boy only by the name of "upadhya" and whom Guruji was teaching the art of reading horoscopes. On his feet on the one side, he sat and on the other side I sat and hestarted his work. He read out to Maharajji that such and such planet was placed in such and such house and such and such were therefore the implications and maharajji nodded in affirmation. After this exercise, I offered "dakshina'' at his feet which Maharajji gave to the said astrologer. I then asked Maharaj whether the boy was good or bad and he replied "neither good nor bad". For a minute or two I was really taken aback. I thought if the boy was not 'good' there was no sense in going for him. Feeling somewhat dejected, I however again asked Maharajji whether or not, I should go for this boy or reject the proposal. On this he replied "Prakashji, go ahead and when this boy comes to our fold he would become all the more suitable. I came back to Delhi and wrote a confirmatory letter to Lucknow and the marriage was performed. 'Upadhya' was a local lad and we used to meet each other very often. One day, he confided in me that particularly that day he had not got a single penny with him and since Maharajji must have known about it, he deliberately waited for me to tally the two "Tewas" as a formality only so that I became entitled to the said 'dakshina' Maharaj treated this as the astrologers fees.

When invitation cards' were printed, I took the first card to Datia and placed it at the Master's feet. While doing so, I requested him to bless by saying "Maharajji yeh kaam sucharu roop se ho jaye". He then called several other discriples present there and asked them

"Prakashji chahate hain ke yeh kaam sucharoo roop se hojai. Aap logon ki kya rai hai". Every body, in unison spoke loudly "Haan Maharaj Sucharoo roop se hi hona chahiye". He then turned back to me and said quite casually, "Jab sabhi ye hi chahte hein to hum kya kar sakte hein. Hum bhi inhi ke saath hein". Thereafter he added that he would also like to attend the marriage himself, to bless the couple, but since he was a strict vegetarian and in our community both time meals contained non-veg dishes, he was reluctant to come personally. He however emphatically said that he would send his blessings from there only. With his blessings I celebrated the wedding in a grand and lavish style which those who attended, remember till today. Maharajji's words, uttered earlier that one other name of Peetambra Mai was 'Raj Rajeshwari' and as such all Her actions were like those of kings and queens only. Some people thought that I must have spent several lakhs on it. Marriage thus went about without any hindrance or trouble.

After the marriage when I confronted Girija with what she had been saying all the while, she fell at my feet and begged to be pardoned. Like me she had also heard the story of 'Narsi Bhagat' in her childhood in whose daughter's marriage. Shri Lord Krishna did everything to ensure a grand marriage but realised the similarity of the two marriage, only now. She admitted that the marriage had divine blessings otherwise our fore-fathers could not have dreamt of such an unbelievably grand wedding. She always used to taunt me "from where so much money would come for the marriage" and my reply always was "the roof will burst and money will pour down through it. Upon this reply she again argued 'Then start living in a thatched hut. This cement roof constructed by the P.W.D. shall never burst". I must however make a confessional note here that while I was and am still a firm believer in 'Destiny' and faith in Her and Maharaj, she always laid more stress on 'Effort' totally unlike me. In this respect at least, we were poles apart. After this marriage she again came back to her own and re-started saying that such a miracle was never likely to occur again when Madhu (my younger daughter) weds. I did not argue any further except to repeat that the thatched roof would again burst to pour money and that I would never step out of my house to search for a boy and that my shoes would still remain in tact. My path demanded and I must surrender to the Lord Krishna and not make any special efforts to receive my ring. How he is himself worried about me. She remained arguing thatched roofs do not go bursting repeatedly. Needers to say that on Indu's marriage, I had spent my last penny and was left with no more financial resources. Arguments and counter arguments finally, ended.

THE STORY OF MADHU's MARRIAGE

One day, I took Girija and our two daughters to Lucknow to attend the marriage of Som the fourth son of my sister. Several prominent persons of our 'biradari' attended. One of the ladies present there spotted Madhu (as is generally the practice with old ladies).

After the marriage, she spoke to Madhu's mother-in-law and told her that she had found an ideal girl for Sherry (my younger Son-in-law). They were already on the look out for a suitable girl and she had informed many of her relatives to search for one. That lady did not know much about our family except that we were 'Zutshi' and lived in Delhi and that I was the real maternal uncle of the bridegroom, Som. The moment these 'Saprus' got this hint, they started making frantic effort to search us. In such a huge place like Delhi is it easy to search an insignificant person like me. After all, I was neither a renowned politician nor a bureaucrat of that stature. There is however a saying "Jin dhoonda tin Paayiyan' gehre Pani paith". How were we located? Col.G.N.Sapru, Sherry's father had served the Delhi N.C.C. for sometime and remembered that there was one boy with the surname 'Zutshi' in his battalion. He therefore rushed to the V.C. office and scanned the various requests. There he found Ashok's name and Address. Ashok was at that time living with Bhai Sahib and Shyam Mohan at Model Town. He then reached Model Town to meet Ashok. Ashok was not there at the moment but Shyam Mohan was there. They both knew each other very well as Shyam Mohan had stayed in Jhansi for several years for his studies and used to visit Saprus with his Maasi with whom he stayed. Shanti Maasi, as she was known addressed Sapru Sahib as Bhai Sahib and Shyam naturally addressed him as "Mamuji". It was a very happy and unexpected meeting after ages. They had a long chat during which Sapru Sahib asked Shyam Mohan whether he knew 'Zutshi' by the name of Prakash and when he was told that this man was no other than his own real uncle, joy knew no bonds. He then wanted to meet me and Shyam Mohan brought him to our residence.

That way he had a look over 'Madhu' as well. After a cup of tea and some sweets, he returned home and told his wife that he had seen the girl and had liked her. Sherry's mother then desired to see her. A meeting was fixed at Wengers at Connaught Place and there was no problem in Madhu going with her elder brother Shyam Mohan to Connaught Place without being told a word about the purpose. They went there as 'strangers' and sat at different tables. After sometimes Sapru Sahib invited them to their own table. They were now at the same table and the old lady is reported to have liked Madhu. Having both approved of the match, they desired to show the girl to Sherry also. He was at the time a captain and posted as an instructor at the I.M.A. Dehradoon. Then they made a plan.

Shyam told me one day that he wanted to go to Mussoorie with his family for a pleasure trip and requested me to arrange a car for him for the purpose. I was a Sales Tax Officer at that time and had absolutely no difficulty in arranging. Till then we did not know anything about all that was happening. Sherry was informed on phone by Sapru Sahib earlier and he was supposed to see the girl at a given restaurant. They had their lunch there and also 'okeyed'. Shyam Mohan and family moved on to Mussoorie and then returned. On his return, Shyam

Mohan confessed in Girija that he had fixed up Madhu's marriage.

When I came to know this, I rejected the proposal on the ground that I did not want to marry my daughter outside Delhi. Hearing of my decision Col.Sapru immediately went to Gen.Raina who had by this time been designated as the next chief of Army Staf to ask for a solution. Gen. Raina told him that this was no problem at all and he would post him in Delhi. Knowing that both Madhu and Sherry had liked each other, I gave my consent. The marriage, due to some reason, had to be performed urgently at short notice, it could not be that grand an affair which saw Indu's wedding. Several relations also could not be invited and I had no time to look for a new big house. Anyway, the marriage was performed. Several eminent personalities like Gen.Raina, Shri P.N.Haksar etc. (a former P.S. to Mrs. Indira Gandhi) participated. It was indeed a matter of pride and privilege for me to entertain such guests. When it was time for 'Vida' Girija, Preeti (Shyam Mohan's wife) and some other ladies sang a 'Vidayi song. It was so sentimental and touchy that hearing it Madhu's mother-in-law actually fainted there and then and Girija too fainted some minutes later. This song is recorded in a casette which I suppose is still with Indu.

Marriage ended, girl gone to her parents-in-law and Girijaji again floored. She saw for herself that I had not stepped out of my house in search of a boy and every thing was finalised in my own drawing room. A noteable feature is that while Deepak's birthday falls on the 26th January (Republic Day) Sherry's falls on the 15th August. He was in fact born on the 15 August 1947 and was named 'Swatantra Kumar' you would note that both these birthdays are celebrated through out the country as 'Public Holidays.

This is just a manifestation of Maa & Maharajji's blessings.

SOME OTHER DREAMS

1) One night I saw 'Maa' in the form of an old lady wearing a cloth only and covering her breast with its 'Pallu'. She was standing in front of me. With one hand on my head she pulled me towards Her removed Her 'Pallu' and took my mouth to Her breast to feed me. I was indeed on the seventh cloud but the dream did not last long and I woke up.

2) While I was in Jammu with Giani I saw one night that almost all my relations were gathering at Rajjan Didda's house and on my enquiring about the purpose I was told by some elderly lady this group had gathered for paying their condolence to 'Rajjan Didda'. I woke up immediately and asked Giani to ring up Indu in Delhi to find out whether all was well with Didda. Indu told Giani that Rajjan Didda's eldest daughter 'Urmila' had passed away. He however did not disclose this news to me since. I was a heart patient, I might not be able to bear the shock. Later on, however, I learnt about it in due course.

3) Aditya, Madhu's son, was appearing for his Higher Secondary

Examination and had plans of joining some college for higher studies. Even before his result was out, I saw, in a dream the St. Stephen's College and Aditya's entering its main gate. In the morning, as soon as I got up I broke this news to Madhu. I was staying with Madhu at Arjun Vihar. I told Madhu that the boy would definitely get admission in that college althought it is indeed very hard to get admitted there.

4) Girija and I were expecting our first child. We were naturally excited. A few days before the delivery 'Ma' appeared in my dream. She seemed to be in a giving mood. She affectionately asked me, "what do you want? Charan ya kamal?" She kept looking at me as if to make me understand that 'Charan (or feet) meant a girl and 'kamal' (lotus) meant a boy. I still did not make a choice and left it to her saying "ma, Jo Tum Chaho, bus Bhagyashali ho". Mai said, "To (then)...." as if trying to say that in that case she herself would come. And my first born (Indu) happened to be a girl. When she was small I could see mai's image in her eyes. She proved to be very lucky for me also as after her birth I got my promotion alongwith a large sum of money as arrears. Once, I remember, Swamiji had also said "Prakashji aapke sab bacchon mein yeh hi aapki hai". When I modestly said, "Maharaj Sab aapke hain", he replied, "Aap hamari baat ka matlab samjhne ki koshish kijiye". I must admit that a special telepathic force still works between Indu and me.

5) Indu was to appear for her Higher Secondary Exam but all of a sudden it was discovered that her age was about two months

short for seeking admission in a college.

There were only two options open to her. Either she should appear for her Higher Secondary Exam next year to make her eligible for admission in some college. Several of my friends and well wishers advised me to file an 'affidavit' and change her date of birth but I just refused to oblige them since my conscience did not permit me to file a false Affidavit, Then what to do? I went to her school and met the principal for a sound professional advice. She was so kind that she immediately called all her teachers of the subjects they taught Indu and asked for their views. Every one of them assured the Principal that if Indu appeared that year she was bound to get First division in her subject and sitting at home for one full year may prove detrimental. The courses might change and she may lose her concentration. It was therefore unanimously decided that she should sit at home after passing her Higher Secondary only, for admission to the college. She accordingly filled up her forms and appeared. Now see what happens.

One night, before her result was out, I saw a dream in which I heard somebody ringing our door-bell and on my response with the word "Kon hai" the caller's voice said "Zutshi Sahib" Indu reh gayi. It was not at all difficult for me to interpret it. In the morning, when I woke up, I told Girija that our Indu had lost her first division but warned Girija not to tell her because that would have a very depressing effect on her. Girija kept her word while not believing. After a few days when the result was out, Indu actually secured a Second Division, Later on when the marks-sheet arrived it was learnt that she had lost her first division by about I mark only.

6) Sometime in the month of November 1996, I saw a short statured lady, very old resembling Rajjan Didda, being administered "Ganga Jal'' the last intake of a dying person.

On waking up I contacted Indu to find out whether she had received any information regarding Rajjan Didda. Though she replied in the negative, my worry about her remained. Subsequently I was informed by her children that she had passed away on the 18th November 1996 only the delayed information was due to some wrong address given on post card.

MAHARAJJI'S FAST - Mai in person, presented him a bowl full of kheer to eat.

More than sixty years back Maharajji told me this strange story. Among the Sanyasis, there is a tradition that they do not cook their own food but go to about seven houses (of grahsta) and whatever they get, suffices for the day.

One day, the weather was inclement and Maharajji decided that he would not Venture out of Petambra Peeth itself. Subsequently, this decision turned into a vow. The whole day passed fasting but no food from any quarter arrived. Imagine the condition of a robust man, a wrestler indeed, without a grain of food in his stomach. By night fall he became a little restless but there was absolutely no question of his breaking the vow. It was now about 10 P.M. and there was a slight drizzle also outside. Suddenly, maharaja saw a very old lady with a stick in one hand and a bowl in the other. When she came quite near she asked him "Are you hungry?" Then take the bowl and eat it. That bowl was full upto the brim and Maharaj gladly emptied it. The lady then disappeared leaving even the bowl behind. It is still kept at the 'Peeth' Maharajji showed it to me. He ate the whole stuff and went to sleep with ease. I still do not know clearly whether he was testing Maa's love and affection for him or was it an exercise in 'Hath Yoga'?

This incident however left a deep impression on my young mind but remained dormant. One day however, I also practised it. It so happened when Indu was apppearing for her M.A. examination and I had no money to pay for her exam fee. Without paying the fee she could not appear for her exam. This was obvious. Although the amount involved was not too big hardly a couple of hundred or so, but even this was not with me at the moment. The reason was that with whatever I had, I had purchased wheat-seed. I was at that time working as Administrative Officer in the Agricultural Deptt. of the Delhi Admnn. and knew of certain that it would fetch me double the price. Bags full arrived at my home and were safely spread. Demand for it was to come in the beginning of the sowing season only. In my zeal I totally forgot that I would have to pay for the children's fees etc. Some of my friends were quite well off and I could borrow this little amount from any one of them but I vowed that I would not do that even if Indu had to forgo her exam. This then became a subject of repeated quarrel with Girija but I was adamant like a rock. To her I only said "Let the last day for filling the Exam form arrive" One day she told me "Tomorrow is the last day" and I replied "Let tomorrow come" She and Indu both were restless, naturally. At that moment I announced my final decision "Thousands of girls finish their education after graduation only. Let Indu be one of them if Mai does not send money to enable her to appear. In the heart of my heart, I was also feeling a little disturbed and thus slept in worry. Now note the miracle. "Mai" appeared in my dream and again asked the same off repeated question. "Have you completely lost faith in me" and when I replied "Mai I am really feeling worried". She said "Pagal"and disappeared, I was again reassured fully and in the morning when I got up, I was quite happy. I knew she was sending me the required money. But I kept quiet. Morning tea was served and Girija again reminded me that that was the last day.

I only told her that still there were three hours left for Indu to go to the college and asked her to wait till then. I swear, I had not even finished my cup of tea when the door-bell rang. I opened the door and saw a good friend Shahid Ali, accompanied by a stranger. I showed them in the drawing Room and asked Shahid. How come I was seeing him at this odd hour. He would come very often almost every day but only in the evenings. He then introduced the stranger to me "He is Lala Kailash Chand a land lord from Karnal (in Haryana). He very urgently needs the latest variety of wheat and since you are in the Agr. Department I thought you would help him" Shahid already knew. I had stored such wheat in my house. 'Tha lala's Ambassador was standing outside and he had also brought labourers to lift atonce bags from my upper storey house. This was done and he paid me in cash a sum of Rs.300/- on the spot. I had purchased it for Rs.150/- only. Taking the seed they left immediately. Shahid promissing to meet me in the evening. Indu filled her form, sat for the exam and passed. So, what I concluded from this incident is that if you try to test 'Mai'. She also tests you but finally concedes and fulfils your desire. "Faith moves mountains" as Shakes Peare has said and my own experience shows that it is true. I again went to the "Pooja" room and bowed before 'Mai' and Maharajji for this act of extra kindness to us and also promised never to repeat this "Huth-Yoga" exercise again in my life. Girija ji once again became speechless. What could she say now? She was herself a witness to this miracle.

THE STORY OF INDU's LECTURERSHIP

After M.A. Indu started looking for the post of a Lecturer. She applied in almost all the colleges but without any success ultimately she got a job in a College at Ajmeri Gate and that too in their "Evening" shift. Many students were even older to Indu in age. I used to take her after office hours and brought her back. it was not considered safe for a young girl to be sent alone I did not have to do this exercise for long as ultimately Shyam Mohan who was also teaching in that college took this responsibility on his shoulder. Our house at Bela Road was luckily on his way to his home in Model Town. However, returning at a late hour every night and teaching boys of older age than her was not to her liking. We also were not happy. But, then did we have any alternative. She therefore decided to take the last resort and that was going to Datia and take Maharajji's blessings. I accompanied her on this trip. It was as usual, morning time, we always used to go there by the night train which reached Datia early next morning. We found Swamiji sitting on his moondah in the courtyard and some disciples sitting on either side. We also took our seats after bowing on his feet. He suddenly became humorous and said "Prakashji a certain lady had come here yesterday and narrated a joke :

"Char mein se teen gaye baqi bache ik
Aadmi mein se aqal Gayi baki bacha sikh"

He laughed heartily. Then again told another joke.

"Theek ho jaaye to dik nahin
Samaj jaaye to sikh nahin"

(Dik means TB)

and again laughed; shortly, thereafter told us to go so that we might not miss the train. As soon as we boarded the train, Indu started sobbing. She complained that listening apart, Swamiji did not even hear her. That meant her mission had failed. I then consoled her, I told her that her calculations were all wrong. He never had uttered a word without meaning which this poor girl could not understand. I told her that she would get a job in some 'Sikh' college because the jokes concerned Sikhls only. According to her, the only 'Sikh' college for women was the Mata Sundri College where to hope for a job was only hoping against hope. The chairman and other member of the governing body, of that entire staff spoke one common language, other than Hindustani and so she saw no chance what so ever, we however returned to Delhi. Indu, heart-broken crest-fallen and thoroughly dejected. Just a few days thereafter. she received from this college only, a letter asking her to appear for an interview on such and such date. When she appeared before the Selection Board, its Chairman (one Dr.Khanna, Head of the Deptt. English, Delhi University) asked her only one question. "Indu, have you not been selected in any other college so far?" And, when she replied "No Madam" she asked the other members of the Board to select her atonce. The interview ended and Indu joined that College and since then, has still been teaching there. My interpretation of Swamiji's words, was vindicated once more.

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

(Darshan of all the Devis at a time)

Only a couple of days after Maa gave me Her Mantra. I saw a dream that I was standing at the edge of an exceedingly beautiful garden and looking at the beautiful flowers. Suddenly I saw a group of ladies (not all in a single file) going through it from my right to left just infront of me. when they came quite near me, they just glanced side ways and had good look at my face. They then turned their full faces sideways to enable me to look at their smiling faces. They were all smiling as if they were all in a playful mood. They were all attired in beautiful silken sarees except that one had tied it in the Maharashtrian style. I could atonce make out that they were not ordinary human beings. They then disappeared after we all saw one another quite fully. I felt very elated and could also conclude that it was purely my own mai's doing.

Before my initiation in Shakti Marg I used to do "Gayatri Mantra" as given to me by my "Kul-Guru" at the time of my sacred thread ceremony, and during that period had also Darshan of "Vishnu Bhagwan" (with His Shankh, Chakra, Gada and Padam) as I saw His portrait which Baua worshipped.

DARSHAN OF TARA MAI

Although, I had worshipped Tara Mai for only a couple of days, yet, most surprisingly, we did not desert each other. Doing my Pooja my prayer one day. I continued to recite the 'Stotrum' and that may be the reason for Her Kindness. But the only strange thing was that She came only to dictate some poetry. While I was staying in Kanpur, the frequency much increased. Every other day, SHE would come and say "get up. I would dictate to you some couplets. The time was generally from 1 A.M. to 3 A.M. 1 would get up atonce and took dictations. Sometimes she would dictate a full poem in English or a full ghazal in urdu Pen and paper I already kept at my writing table, provided to me kindly by Giani. She would then disappear and I would go to bed again. Later on, in the mornings when I scanned them, I found that they were only ordinary "Tuk Bundis only a very few couplets I considered good. Now see my audacity and foolishness. Next time when she came and asked me to get up. I replied "No Maa I am not getting up. You dictate very poor poetry". On hearing my reply she said "with a broad smile on her face" Get up. Today I propose to dictate better couplets. I then got up and she dictated two complete ghazals. Complete in the sense of the number of couplets that are supposed to be in a ghazal as also the Radif and Qaa-fia" I can swear that till a moment before. I had absolutely no idea of the thought and. ideas or the subjects of these cfhazals. While they would be printed at the end, I propose to quote one couplet here only.

Rota Mujhe dekha to kaha Aan kei kisne
Rakh mujh pe bharosa, Mein hoon ke nahin hoon"

Some of my ghazals were sung at the Peetambra Peeth concerts on Sunday evening and particularly one song in Rag Jaunpari was very much appreciated.

This practice went on for sometime in Datia too but my subsequent heart-attack finished everything, for ever. I have however no regrets. At least she made me a poetaster" So deep was the affection of a mother to Her child that it is impossible for any human being to fathom it. It was the limit. She did not get angry with my reply rather smiled.

ABRACADABRA

For malaria and other fevers, Swamiji used to give the above mentioned "Yantra". It was supposed to be used by the ancient Jews.

These letters were written in a triangular form on a piece of paper, the paper then was folded and tied - either to the patients arm or was supposed to be worn by him. I may explain how it is written triangularly. You write each word separately in a line. The begin the second line from beneath the second with 'B' here. The third line should begin beneath the letter 'R' (third letter) and so on. After the last line you would notice a triangle has been formed. Fold then the paper and tie it to the patient. It is within my knowledge that with this prescription he had cured several patients. I am however not quite sure whether the cure was wrought by only the power of the 'Yantra' or it was due to his own spiritual powers. Any way,' we should be concerned with the 'cure' only.

ANOTHER MIRACULOUS CURE (Again, seeing is believing)

Sometime in early 1975, after Madhu's marriage, I suffered a very severe attack of diabetes mellitus. It was actually simmering inside for several months but I did not realise its gravity. However, when I started having insatible thirst and drinking bottles and bottles of water did not quench my thrist. I consulted our family doctor, one Dr.Handa, a mild mannered and a thorough gentleman. He advised me to get my blood sugar and urine tested. When I showed him the result of these tests, he immediately referred me to the Metabolic Clinic of the Irwin Hospital. Sugar in my blood was more than four percent. The expert who examined me confided that my life could not last more than six months. To make the matter worse, I lost my eye-sight too. Later on, I learnt that eyes are the first Target of diabetes, the second being diabetic - coma. Since I have all my life remained a "Moorkh" as confirmed by both 'Mai' and 'Maharajji', I started rather snobbishly to compare myself with similar plight of the famous English Poet 'Milton'. In his sonnet 'On his blindness' he had described how he had become blind "here half my age" I thought if he could pass the rest of his life peacefully there was no reason why I could not. The dietician of the Hospital had prescribed me a special diet (Soyabin loaves of bread, one cup of milk, a cup of curd and a bowl of chicken). I was having this diet only and though 'Ramu our old whole-time servant was there, Girija used to cook my special diet herself.

This nutritious diet did not have any effect on me and my weakness increased to such an extent that I could not go even to the toilet on my own. Girija used to take me there. Now she became extremely worried and directed Yogi to go to Datia atonce to apprise Maharajji about my condition and request for his blessings. Yogi atonce left for Datia and met Maharajji. The latter asked him to bring "Prakashji" alongwith him and the boy returned, thinking all the time that Maharajji had asked for the 'Impossible'. After all, how can a man board a train and go upto Datia when he cannot go even go to the toilet. He told his mother too that he saw no hope of my getting well. No blessings had been showered. It is now that a miracle starts happening. From that day onwards, I started regaining strength and started going to the toilet without any support. And, within a week I told Yogi that I was fit enough to go upto Datia. We both went. As soon as I reached the Varanda (where his Paduka s are now kept) maharaj was just coming out of his bed-room and met me just there. The moment he saw me, he started giving slaps, so forcefully that I could hardly bear. He had been a wrestler in his early life and the slaps were naturally administered from a wrestlers hands. one on my left arm, the other on the right one, two on the back and on my head.

These blows left me stunned as I could not imagine the reason behind them.

Immediately thereafter however, he ran his merciful hand gently on my head and back and then said smilingly "Prakashji humne aapki diabetes khatam kar di hai" "ab aap jitna meetha khana chaahen, kha sakte hein". And then after a little pause said "Dekha Sahib aapne, Mantra Shastra ka kamal". At that moment I found my audacity to reply (I rarely spoke previously before him) Maharajji Yeh Sab aapka kamal hai, Mantra Shastra ka nahin. He laughed it out and I returned. Very soon I started going to office to resume my normal work. The other miraculous aspect of this affair was that Mai and Maharajji did not permit my retina to be damaged and so, very soon I also regained my lost eye-sight. Had it been damaged you can imagine the consequences - I would have become blind for the whole of my life and might have been composing sonnets only and I, thus, would never have been able to write this booklet which Maharajji wanted me to write. Seeing isbelieving again.

Maha Lakshmiji's darshan - yet again

Indu and Madhu had been married and Yogi and Giani had got their respective jobs outside Delhi. Girija and I were now alone alongwith our old and faithful Ramu. No worries and no anxieties apparently although Girija started complaining of certain ailment. I thought the pangs of separation of her two daughters had made her lonely. She was not habitual to live alone without children. That made me also a little sad but since I was able to pass my idle time playing with my friends, I didn't have enough time to brood on my loneliness but when I returned to my house late at night I used to see Girija, I felt sorry as well. One night Mai Mahalakshmi appeared before, me, loaded as usual, with jewellery from head to toe, wearing a maroon coloured silken saree and smiling. She said "Meine tera bahut sona le liya na? Tera maine bahut paisa kharch karwa diya na. Laken mut chinta kar. Mein tujhe phir doongi, lekin aaj nahin, kal.'' The dream ended and I started guessing where from this money would come. From my P.F. and Gratuity combined with one third of my pay commuted, the amount came to very, many thousands and then I realised Mai's dream come true. For the first time. I also realised that Mai's tomorrow did not mean the morrow which was to come after another twenty four hours but denoted only 'future'. The myth that her 'tomorrow' means over ten years as I had been thinking all the time, also exploded. At that moment I also recollected what maharajji had said on that fateful Dussehra day after seeing my palm. "Prakashji, you will become a lakhpati one day". It was very far-fetched imagination. At that time a single rupee meant a rupee indeed and it was widely believed that if a man had one hundred rupees in his pocket he would have the intoxication of a full bottle of whisky. Any way see how his words uttered more then fifty years back have turned out true like a writing on the wall.

The Story of my marriage with Girija

Bhabi Sahib having already died and his little children (Asha and Ashok) not happily living in Dhaulpur with Bhai Pearey (because of his own little children and their regular fights) it was decided by Bhai Sahib and Bhai that they should be brought to Delhi under our care. But, both Bhai and I were bachelors and it was found necessary that there should be a lady in the house. Bhai refused to marry on health grounds and only I remained in the field.

The axe fell on me. In the first instance I stoutly resisted the move, explaining that my Swamiji had advised me not to marry at all (in case of some emergency or unfortunate circumstanceif Ihad to marry then it should not be below the age of thirty. I was twenty-seven only. Bhai Sahib, Bhai were discussing the matter and I was also present. When arguments turned into heated ones, ‘Bhai Sahib played his last trump-card. He said let none of you marry. He would send his children to some orphanage. Who could bear this remark? It was the last straw on the back of the proverbial camel and thus the "camel" broke down. I considered and agreed to marry though most reluctantly since I was feeling all the time inside us that I was flouting my Guru's instructions. Anyway, now a girl was to be searched and Bhai Pearey and Bhabi Peari insisted that she should be of their choice. Infact Bhabi Peari had already had one in her mind belonging to Lucknow, she suggested her to Bhai Sahib and openly declared that she would bring a gold-belt (soney ki tagri). In those days it was the fashion to give these belts in marriage of daughter and was considered a sign of affluence of their parents. Rajjan didda and bari didda were also in consultations. Rajjan didda argued that a girl of an affluent family would never like to become a mother of two children from the very day of her marriage and the life of the children may still remain unhappy. Rajjan didda was married to Pt.Shyam Sunder Narain Taimni whose brother had been married to 'Shammo', the eldest sister of Girija. They both lived in the same posh locality of Jodhpur, Sardar Pura and met almost everyday. 'Shammo' and her parents were also frantically looking for a suitable match for their youngest child Girija. Shamman didda (Shammo) asked Rajjan didda for my hand the latter asked her to get Girija to Jodhpur so that she could see the girl herself. This was done. She was found to be not having that fair a complexion and was short statured too. Rajjan Didda then invited me to come to Jodhpur to see the girl myself. Although I did go to Jodhpur but on reaching there I told Didda that I would not have any say in the matter and that the decision to marry or not to marry rested entirely with her.

Didda then wrote letters to Bhai Sahib. Bhai Pearey etc. When Bari didda came to know of this proposal, she commented that she knew the girl's mother very well and revealed that she was a patient of hysteria. Since this was supposed to be a hereditary disease therewas every likelihood of the girl developing it. She therefore strongly objected to the proposed alliance. Bhai Pearey vehemently opposed on the ground that the family was extremely poor. He had already an eye on the rich family who would give a gold belt, besides all other ornaments to make it a big affair.

It would thus be seen that my entire family was against this proposal except, of course, my revered Rajjan Didda. Alas! she is no more today, having died in the midst of my writing this book. She went on insisting that a poor girl only could look after the children well. She infact was bold enough to ask Girija who nodded in agreement in a rather subdued manner, the deal was perhaps clinched. But the stormy opposition continued. It was impossible for didda to face it and at one stage it appeared that she had relented. Now see what happens. It was a sunday. we had cooked (Bhai and myself together) meat (Roghan Josh) and paranthas, sweet curd was also there for the pudding. We ate heartily and then I retired to my room, had a beetle leaf and puffed at a cigarette. Thus I went for a siesta. When I fell asleep and might have been in a slumber, I suddenly saw a dream. I saw that I was sitting in my class in the. Dhaulpur school, facing the entrance/exit door and attending to our teachers lecture. Suddenly, I saw Girija standing outside and waving me with her hand to come out. I got up and went out and asked her what was the matter. She told me that she wanted to see the Kali Mai temple (it was in the vicinity of our school) but did not know the way. I immediately patted her at the shoulder and asked her to accompany me. I said, "Come along. I would show you". The dream ended and when I got up I came to the conclusion that no power could stop her from having mai's 'darshan' if she wanted. I considered my house also as a temple of Kali Mai since I had her portrait and was worshipping 'Her' daily. Although the chances were absolutely bleak because of the ever growing opposition, tables suddenly turned on them. Shyamji Bhai, Rajjan Didda's husband was till now only a silent spectator and had not spoken a word either for or against the proposal. He otherwise too, was a reserved type of a person and spoke very little. But, he commanded lot of respect not only from his own subordinates and family members but also from Bhai Sahib, Bhai Pearey and all of us.

He now broke his silence and wrote a letter to Bhai Sahib supporting Rajjan Didda's arguments. He admitted that while it is true that the girl comes from a poor family but that was a plus point also. She would definitely look after the children better than a rich girl. There was then no further opposition from any quarter and marriage was settled. Oneday after we were married I told Girija the dream I had. When I described that she was wearing a South Indian cotton saree with very small black squares and her hair were all combed to the centre of her skull. (as we see in Lord Shiva's portraits) with a white jasmine garland around it, she said that infact she had been wearing such squares and also maintaining her hair that way. While it may be true that she did not bring that much gold and so many saris which normal middle class familiesare supposed to give in our biradari, these points never mattered so much because the only consideration at that time was the bringing up of the children.

Kanwar Chattar Singh

Our Land Lord in Dhaulpur was one Kanwar Chattar Singh, a distant relation of the Maharaja of Dhaulpur, Sir Udaibhan Singh. Our house was infact an annexe of his own mansion. He had six sons, Brijender Singh, Giriraj Singh, Jai Ram Singh, Govind Singh, Gambhir Singh and Ghanshyam Singh. The first two were from his first wife. They were almost the age of Bhai Sahib and Bhai Pearey.

The other two were of my age, Jai Ram Singh was a little elder to me, Govind Singh, of my age and the rush two, a little younger to me. Bhaiji used to teach us (all the five) together. I have a hazy idea that Kanwar Sahib did not charge any rent for his house, Bhaiji did not claim any tuition fee. This was perhaps a pact between the two. Of all the brothers, the number two (Giriraj Singh) was the most handsome, very fair complexioned and had his education at the Mayo College Ajmer where only the sons of Rajas and Maharajas or of their kins-. could get admissions. middle class fellows had no access to this prestigious institution. One of his classmates and a very good chum, was Man Singh who ascended the throne of Jaipur after the death of his father. The moment he became the ruler of that big state, he wrote a personal letter to Giriraj Singh, inviting him to come to Jaipur and take charge of a post of high authority with all the possible nerks.

When he read out this letter to his father and all of us, the family's joys knew no bounds. But, alas! he could not avail of this golden opportunity. He suddenly fell ill and was diagnosed a patient of T.B. He left for Switzerland for treatment. After a long treatment he returned to Dhaulpur, completely cured but the climate of Dhaulpur just did not suit him and again he left for Switzerland where he ultimately died. He had a camera he took my photograph but since it could not be developed in Dhaulpur, he took the film with him and promised me to send a copy thereof from Switzerland. After his death there, we learnt that all his belongings were burnt perhaps according to the Swiss customs and so my photograph also became a casualty.

When Bhaiji finished with our alphabets, he started teaching us words from these alphabets and two patent words from letter 'A' and 'B' were "Abundance" and "Benedicton".

Bhaiji would write these words at the top and beneath his hand, we would fill the entire page. This exercise went on for may days till we came to letter 'G'. We were all practising with words starting from this alphabet, but suddenly. I do not know, what happened to me. I took a note book (other than the one I was using with Bhaiji) and started writing on it 'Giriraj'. 'Giriraj' umpteen times. Not only had I admired Giriraj Singh but also his name, which somehow touched the very core of my heart.

Imagine a child filling note books with Giriraj 'Giriraj' only so enamoured of this name, as if breathing and inhaling Giriraj. Oneday after my marriage when I narrated this silly story to Girija, she exclaimed and said that her own name was infact Giriraj Dulari and had been shortened to Girija for common use. Since that day I did not address her as Girija anymore. I always called her Giriraj.

The Story of Girijals death

Shortly after the marriage of Madhu, Girija's health started deteriorating and she started losing weight rather rapidly. I showed her to a doctor. He gave her some injections and some capsules for strength and directed me to bring her again after a week alongwith the latest weight - report. I did so but when the doctor saw it, he remarked that no two weighing machines gave the same result and advised to weigh her on the same machine each time she is weighed.

I therefore went to the market and bought a brand new portable weighing machine and when she asked me as to why I have spent so much for a machine for her sake, my reply was that her life was far more precious for me then this wretched piece of iron. However her weight never increased and she went on sinking. oneday she told me that she was feeling completely bored and wanted to go to Indu's place for a change. Her request was immediately granted and the same evening she was at Gul mohar Park. Then, she got a sudden attack of double pneumonia and was atonce shifted to hospital, Geramycin injections were administered which though cured her of pneumonia damaged her kidneys. She was placed on dialysis but to no avail and ultimately breathed her last on the 29th April 1979.

In the passing however I may mention here that whenever she used to see on the T.V. some V.I.P.'s death and how wreaths, were being placed at his pyre, she used to exclaim with excitement, "What a grand death". When she died, I was in the NCC and so the Director N.C.C. and various other officers brought floral wreaths and placed them on her pyre. I still feel her soul must have felt great consolation - fulfulment of her cherished desire.

While she was so badly ill, Indu, went to Datia to seek the 'Masters' blessings. He was sitting at that time in the backyard baggia with several of his disciples and discussing some matters. Indu therefore had to sit for sometime in the verandah. There was absolutely no chance of maharaj seeing her but he immediately changed the topic and remarked "Bhai abhi tak ye hi manyata chali aai hai ke suhagin ka marna he shubh mana jata hai" Indu overheardthese words and started sobbing. She had unfailingly understood the real meaning of this sentence and had concluded that her mother was not not going to survive. However, a little later when she was ushered in and bowed before the Master, Maharajji tried to console her. The game was however over and Indu returned to Delhi,Gyani then made another attempt. He was posted at Tughlakabad and oneday, while returning from the office he dropped at the A.I.I.M.S. where Maharajji had been admitted by this time, being seriously ill. In every hospital there are fixed visiting hours beyond which no visitor is allowed with out written pass from the hospital authorities. Gyani had not taken such a "pass" and the men on duty, seeing him in uniform did not object to his entry and he went straight to Maharajji's room. Maharajji asked him how he had come and whether he had a "pass" and when Gyani replied that he had none, Maharajji said "bagheir pass wala to fail hota hai sahib" implying that he had failed in his mission. Gyani also understood it and came back dejected. Thereafter I made another attempt to get his blessings.

He immediately repeated his oft-repeated remark "Prakashji aap to moorkh ke moorkh he rahe". Are Bhai maut ka koi elaj hai? He called Dr.Yogesh Mishra, Motilal Master, and all those present in the room and asked them the same question. "Maut ka kol elaj hai" and every one replied "No sir". Thus I also failed in my endeavour. With her death, light went out of my house and my hearthbecame eternally innocent to fire. My life indeed became a one wheel cart, very difficult to drag on but still, some how, I am dragging. Jigar Muradabadi wrote so aptly.

"Magar tanhaeyiyan apni jagah hain". I have become a loner and have been wandering from place to place. Anyway, this was destined and so it happened. As regards, pangs of separation, less said the better since only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.

SAGAR (Pandit Shivnath Sharma)

This book, I believe, shall not be complete unless I mention a few words about this angel of a man. He has been my sincerest friend, Cum brother cum, 'Guru-Bhai. Anybody who has met him and known him otherwise will certify that his heart really is as large as ocean. The whole Peetambra-Peeth complex bares ample testimony to his large heartedness or if I may say so ocean heartedness. The majestic temple built by him for **Van ikhandeshwarnath,** the elegant Haridra Kund from which Peetambra Mai is supposed to have emerged, the exquisite prayer hall (also known as Manipur - Dham) which was built according to the strict Tantric scriptures brought from the south and containing a white marble statue chiselled by expert craftsman of Jaipur, the towering dining hall where 1500 persons can dine in one row (plus 23 living rooms) as well, all owe their gratitude to Sagar. Every nook & corner of the premises has been studded with marbles. His another gift the provision of tower with an overhead tank which gives piped water supply to the devotees continuously is really a boon. Undoubtedly, crores of rupees have been spent by him without a single wrinkle on his forehead and, the beauty of all this is there is not a single stone which bears his name.

Maa Kali & the Master

I had not completed even seven years of my age when one day during a goat-sacrificing ceremony Kali maa penetrated into my body and took me under her care. Being a child I couldnot understand all this and forgot this historical moment. However some years later when I came under the care of my most revered Gurudev and when he gave me a Saraswati Mantra to recite I was stopped by Kali Maa from saying it and she instructed me to say her Mantra instead then I realised that she did not want me to look towards any other God or Goddess except she alone. Since then I have been getting her ever-merciful blessings like a stream till today and there were no 'full stops' except one for a very brief period during my 'dark days'. I consider myself as a blessed son of Kali Maa who did not hesitate even to breast feed me. This was coupled by the care of the master who considered me as his most favoured child and found solutions to all my problems and guided me. incidentally, this was not confined to me only but to my children & their children.

J.Krishnamurti in his tiny book which carries a foreword by the renowned Annie Besant of yester years has written "that whatever he heard from his Guru and which he could retain in his memory he has written down without caring for the expressions. Incidently, I have also, like Krishnamurty tried my level best to reproduce whatever Maharajji spoke and to the extent I retain in my memory. The readers will note that at several places I have quoted Maharajji verbatim.

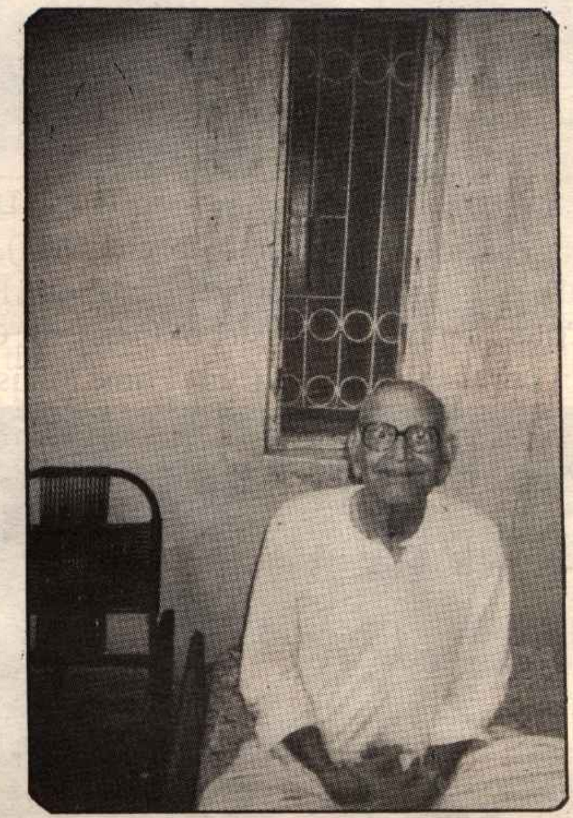
So much has already been written about him, that I see no scope to add to the volume thus written. However I would like to quote one couplet of firaque Gorakhpuri which according to me fits in all its grooves with Maharajji. With due apologies to Firaque I quote it, I have only substituted the word firaque with 'Maharaj'. This couplet runs as follows

"Aane Wali naslein tum Per fakr karengi hum asro
Jub unko dhyan aaega, tumne Maharaj ko dekha hai.

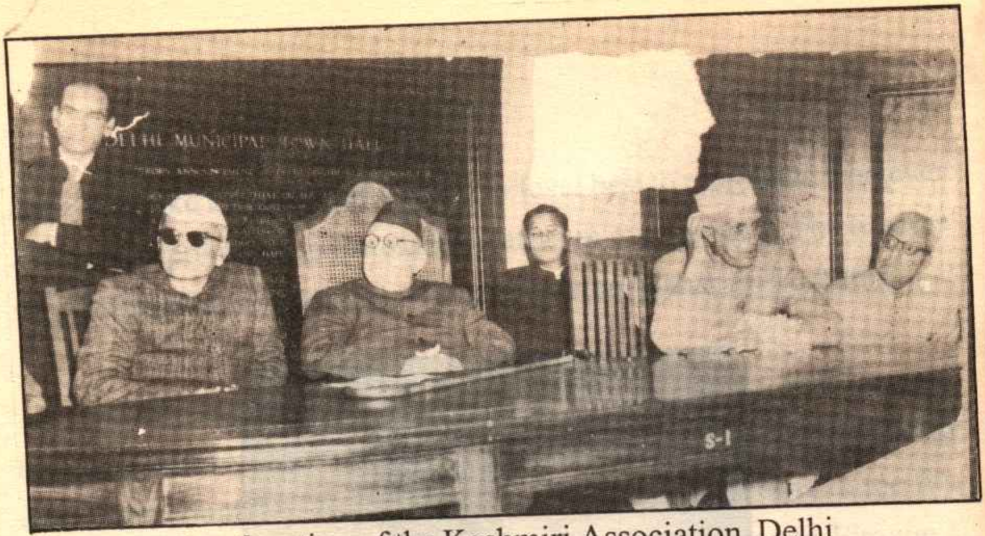
I can only end by quoting a line from Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas-

"Prabhu ki kripa Bhayo Sab Kaaju
Janm hamaar saphal bhayo Aaju"

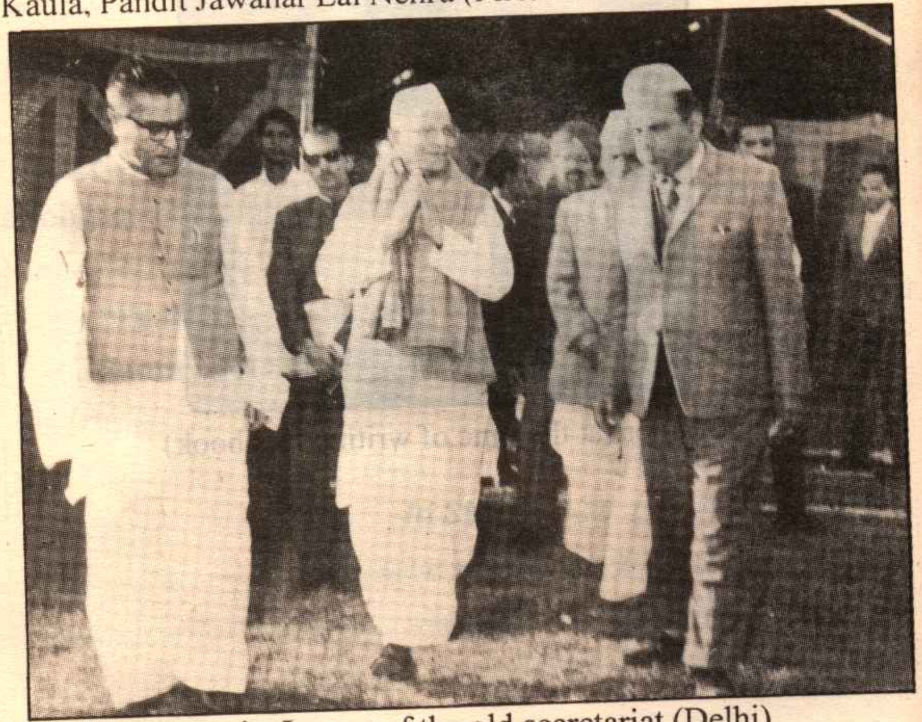
Iti Shri



Author (at the time of writing this book)



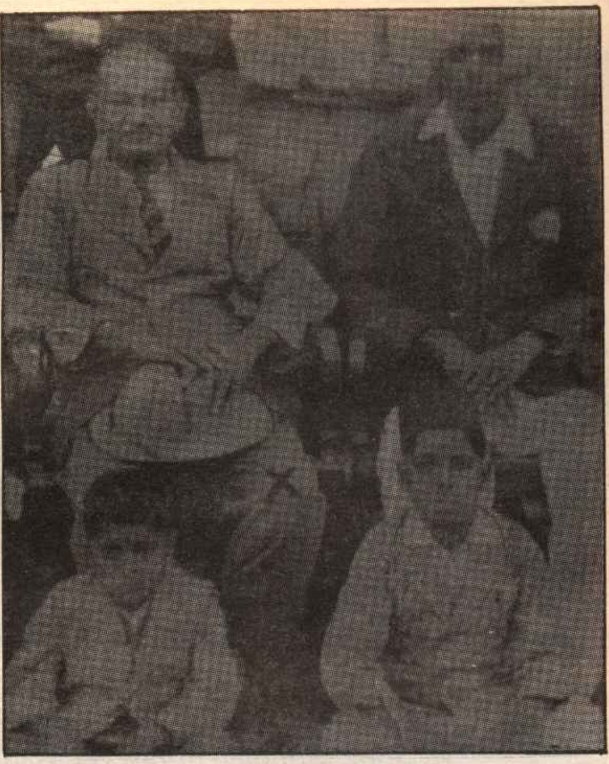
At a function of the Kashmiri Association, Delhi
From Left to Right- Bhai (Anand Mohan Zutshi), who was secretary of the Association at that time (standing), Pandit Kailas Nath Katju (the then Home Minister of India), Sir Ganga Ram Kaula, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru (First Prime Minister of India)



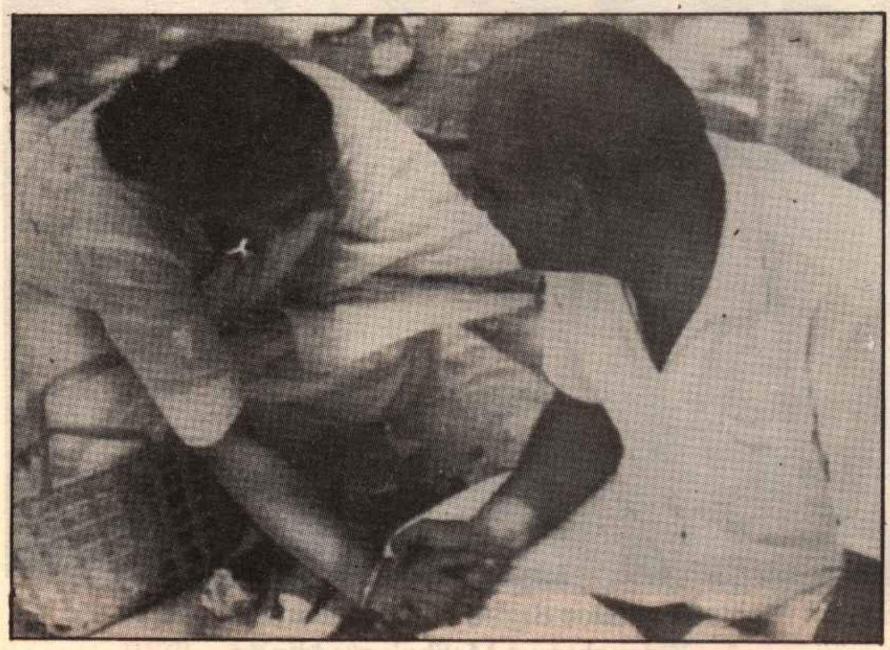
At the Lawns of the old secretariat (Delhi)
(L-R) Shri Mir Mushtaq Ahmed (the then Chief executive Councillor of Delhi), Shri Morarji Desai (Former Prime Minister of India) and Author

Author (In the centre) with Mr. P.N. Haksar (The then Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister) and Mrs. Sapru (Madhu's mother-in-law) at Madhu's wedding

Shyam Mohan (Extreme Right) with General T.N. Raina and his daughter at Madhu's wedding

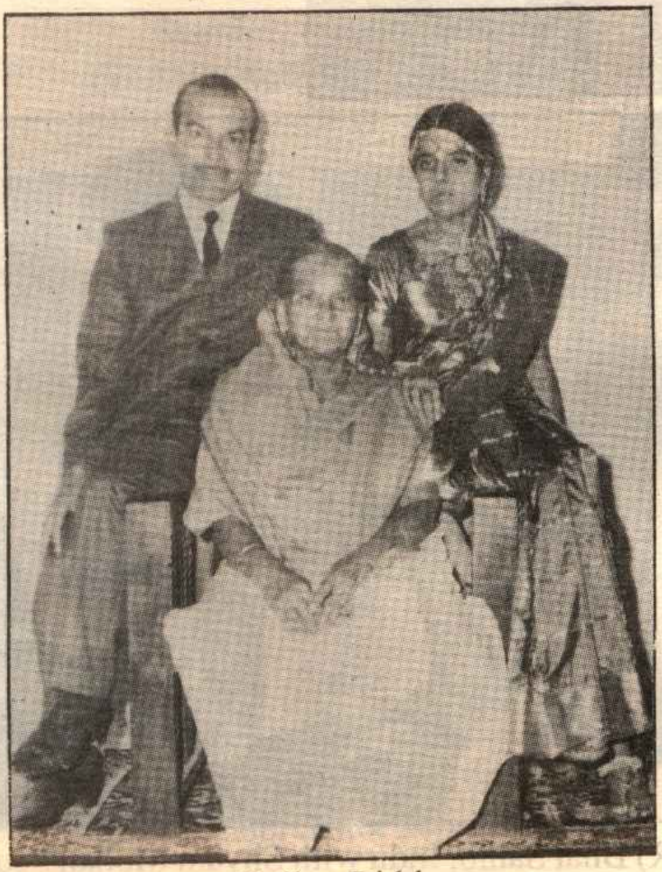


Bhaiji, the author's father
(with his hat on his lap)
The author as a young
boy sitting at his feet



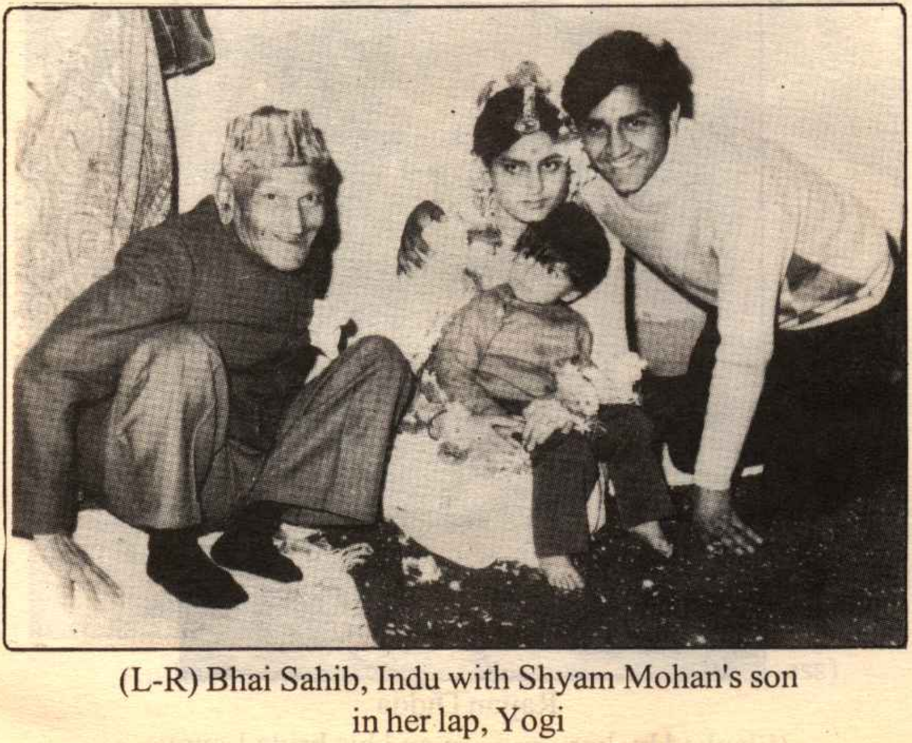
Author with wife Girija (Moments of togetherness)

Author with Daughter Madhu, Son-in-law Sherry and Mr. P.N. Haksar at Madhu's wedding

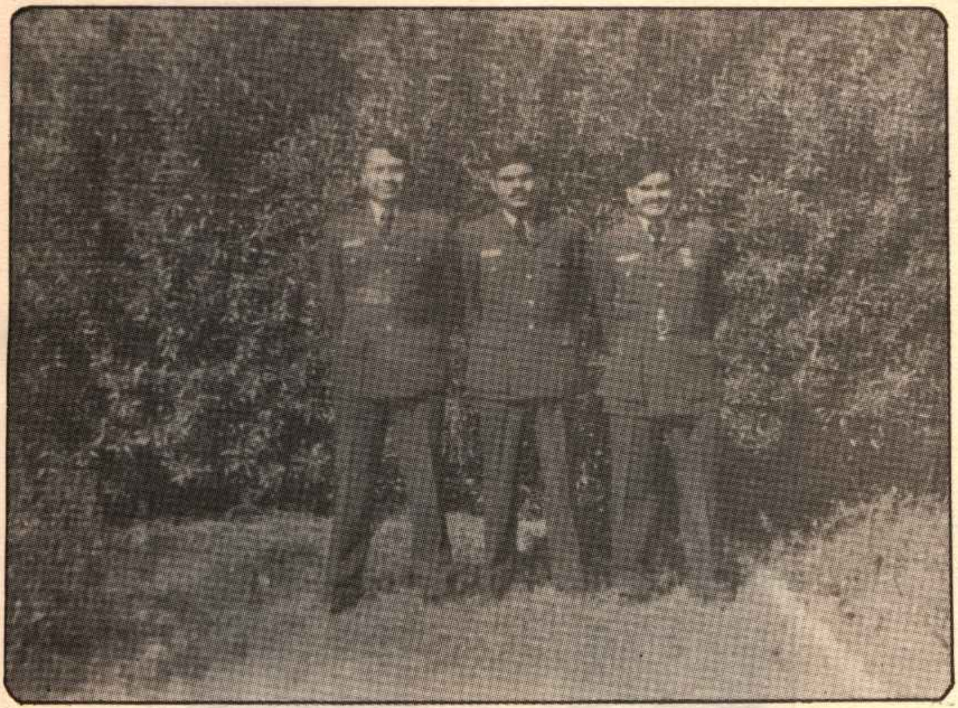


Rajjan Didda
(Flanked by her son Som and his bride Laxmi)

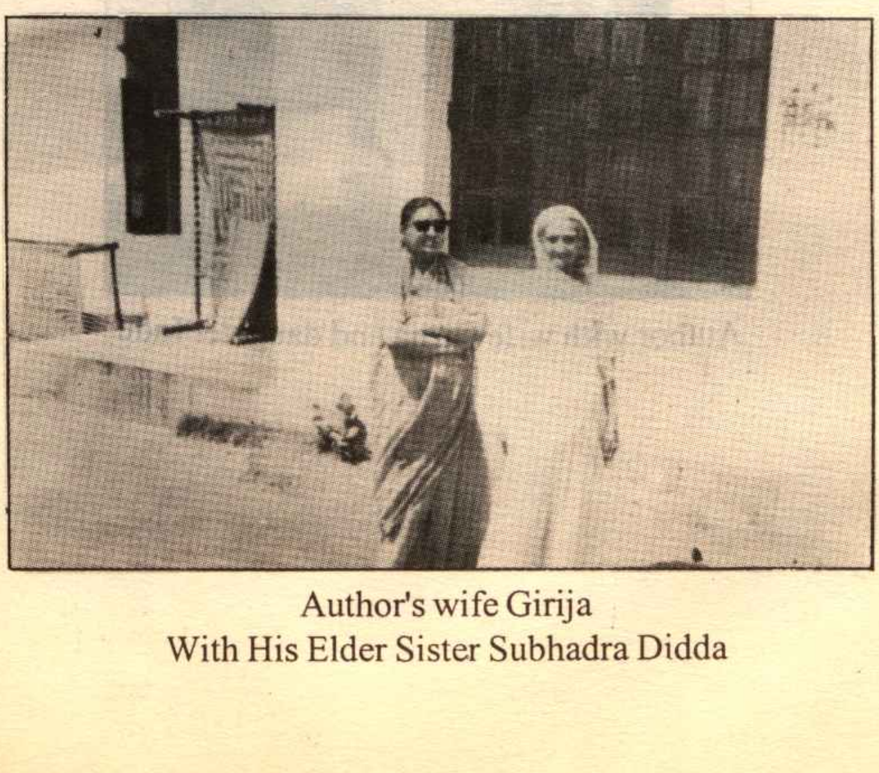
(L-R) Girija, Author (with Indu in his lap), Asha, Ashok (Bhai Sahib's children) and Rajjan Didda at Birla Mandir (In this photograph of Indu, the author always saw the image of 'Ma'



(L-R) Bhai Sahib, Indu with Shyam Mohan's son in her lap, Yogi



Standing extreme right
GYANI (Author's younger son)



Author's wife Girija
With His Elder Sister Subhadra Didda

Author with wife Girija and daughter Indu

Gyani with wife Vidhu

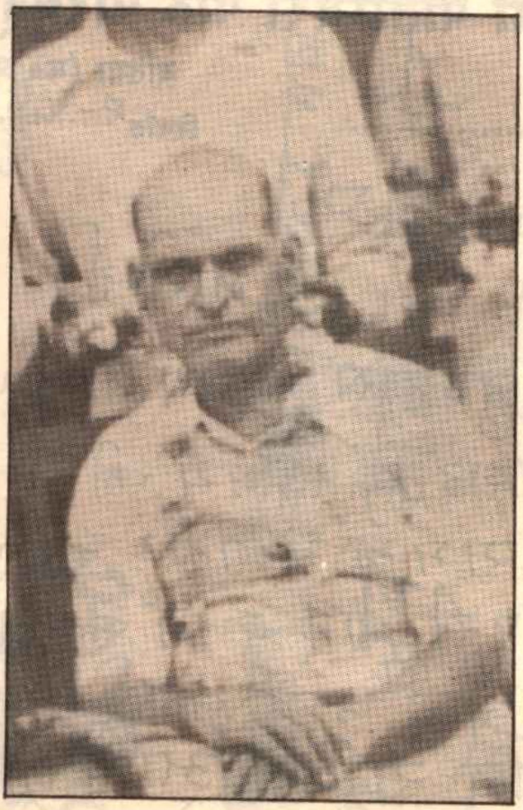
Yogi with wife Neena

Anju and Dipti (Younger daughter of Gyani and Yogi)

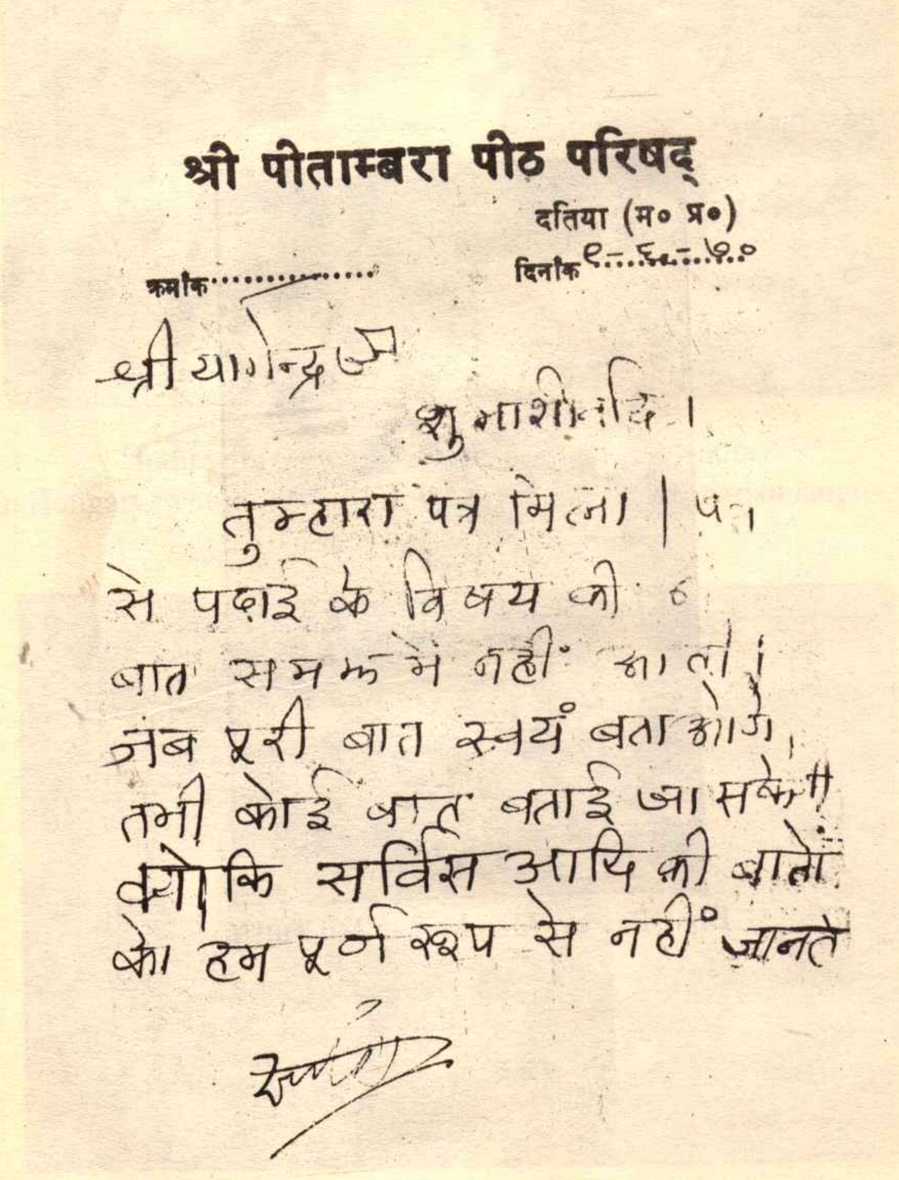
Adya and Divya
(Elder daughter of Gyani and Yogi)

Indu with her husband Deepak and son Gaurav
in Hungary, where she had gone for a course in Hungarian language

(L-R) Aditya and Gaurav (Author's Grandsons)



Bhai Pearey (Man Mohan Lal Zutshi)



श्री पीताम्बरा पीठ परिषद्

दतिया (म० प्र०)

क्रमांक ....

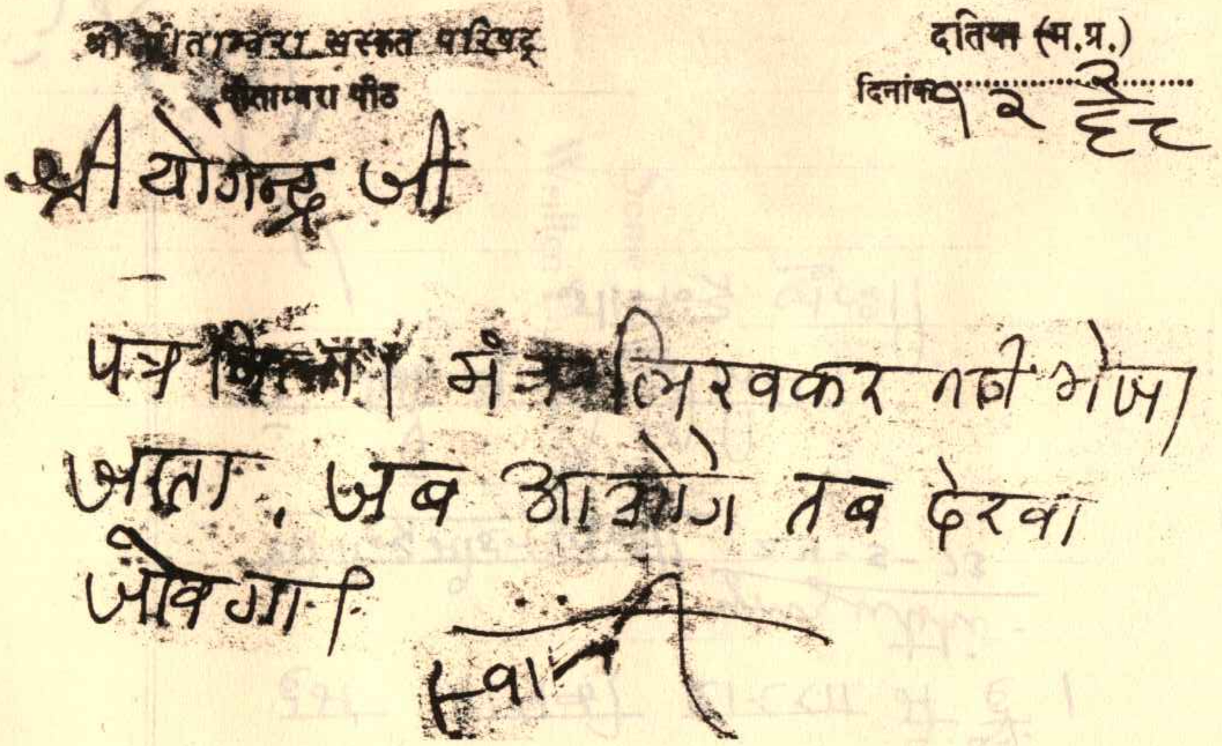
दिनांक ९-८-७०

श्री योगेन्द्र जी

शुभाशीर्वाद ।

तुम्हारा पत्र मिला । पत्र से पढ़ाई के विषय की बात समझ में नहीं आती । जब पूरी बात स्वयं बताओगे, तभी कोई बात बताई जा सकेगी क्योंकि सर्विस आदि की बातें को हम पूर्ण रूप से नहीं जानते

स्वामी



श्री पीताम्बरा संस्कृत परिषद्
पीताम्बरा पीठ

दतिया (म.प्र.)
दिनांक १२ ३ ६८

श्री योगेन्द्र जी

पत्र मिला । मैं [illegible] लिखकर नहीं भेजा जाता, जब आओगे तब देखा जावेगा ।

स्वामी

माँ ! हमारी रक्षा कीजिये ।
हम ,आपकी शरण में हैं ।

योगेन्द्र मोहन ज़ुत्शी ymzutshi 24-5-73

माँ, मुझे सुबुद्धि दीजिए ।
ज्ञानेन्द्र ज़ुत्शी

Some of The Poems
Written By The Author

A
A
A
B

A
To
Al
Or

Im
In

My Most Revered Guru Dev & Gopal Das

An incarnation of God to some, was Swamiji
A Messiah in miracles, was Swamiji
A benefactor, to others, was Swamiji
But, everything to me, was Swamiji.

He renounced the world at an early age
Travelled a lot, on pilgrimage
Was it in quest of Truth, for a perfect sage
It's rather difficult, for us, to gauge.

At the banks of Narmada, he meditated
To the MOTHER, his life, he dedicated
All ills from his mind, eradicated
On sprituality alone, he concentrated.

In spiritualism, he attained tremendous height
With eyes wide open he saw the LIGHT
It made his life exceedingly bright
A tremendous joy - a sheer delight.

Impossible to achieve, what he had got
In Wisdom, Truth, Deed and Thought

The whole astral world appeared to have bought
Such was his triumph, Providence personally wrought.

How easily did he, perform a miracle
Made people forget Delphi's oracle
Never brooked in his path, any obstacle
Nothing to him was un-surmountable.

Gopal Das, a desciple, of frame harder
In the heat of moment, committed a murder
News of the crime came, like a thunder
Shook one and all, made everyone shudder.

The police had arrested him
And none had protected him
Friends had detested him
And others had rejected him.

He came down running towards the Master
``Save me Master" Save me my Master"
``Befallen me, Sir, a sheer disaster
I have committed, a gruesome murder".

Lawyers tried hard, but could not defend
Almost left Gopal Das, himself to fend

Every one fore-saw, has come, his end
Just then the Master did his blessings send.

``Gopal Das," he said, ``Committed a murder
But, he is repentant, and this does matter
Since under Mother's feet, he has taken shelter
His enemies must run, helter skelter".

He shut his eyes, some hymn, he sang
Then suddenly came out, with a bang
``No Power on earth, can Gopal Das hang"
Exactly, like a lion, his voice rang.

The High Court had its judgement announced
Sentence of death by hanging - pronounced
His wife fainted by its sheer sound
It also hit Gopal Das, on the rebound.

Through Master's miracle, his wife was saved
And way to new life, was thus paved
Cheerfully at him, Destiny, Her hand waived
Gay was now Das, to rest, his agony laid.

Thousands of such miracles, he performed
Impossibilities to possibilities, he transformed

Many, many desciples, he thus reformed
Opinion, he was God-incarnate, people formed.

He picked me up, as if from dust
where I had already put on some rust
``Rise, Prakashji, rise", and ``rise you must"
``Time for you to feel, some spiritual thirst".
He then initiated me to the Tantrik ``Order"
I readily complied with - it was his order
``Concentrate on meditation further & further
To achieve your goal, there is no way either".

Having fulfilled his mission, he is now gone
Whoever had come, had likewise- gone
But before he left, he showed us dawn
The Legacy he left, shell never be gone..

Three Unequally Married Couples

A mother like wife, much elder to him in age
Reminded me of Henry VIII, from history's page.
I was anxious to probe into the facts of this case
Towards his grave, therefore, I did pace.

Hello, Henry, how do you do?
``Better ask how did I do."
Were no younger girls available in London
Or did you, in any way, feel bounden?
Younger there were many, to me in age
But none came over, near my cage.
Just as ``Foundations fly the wretched".
So also ``good girls fly the cursed".
By her, I was mesmerized,
By her, I was hypnotised,
By her, I was stupefied,
And so to her, I was tied.

Stupe fied? You mean obfuscated?
Yes, You have correctly interpreted.

Tell me what happened thereafter?
``The hero died in the first chapter"

Never been happy with her at all
Never did enjoy even a ball.
But, why have you come to ask me
Arn't there others like me.

Me, I asked him, not to bore
For, I have come to know some more
Talk in a tone only I could hear
None should be able to over-hear
My wife is not dead, but sleepeth here
So also am I, though weepth here.

My marriage could remain a mystery
But for this wretched history.
With her, I was infatuated
In love, I hadn't graduated.
I thought of the country, I was ruling
She thought only I was fooling.
But why have you come to ask me
Aren't there others, like me.

Go to Allahabad, and you will find
A couple, with similar bent of mind.
A far disastrous case than mine
Undoubtedly, would open, eyes thine.

The groom not yet forty-the bride sixty
Their doom, they share, fifty -fifty.
Accordingly, to Allahabad, I went
To hear what the boy had to give vent.
Anxiety was writ large on his face
Marriage, I concluded, must be the base.

``Hello" I said, ``dear old boy"
In her hands, are you a toy?
What made you marry her
Didn't you find any other?
She had a lot of money with her
Greed prompted me, to go for her.
Then Henry had done the same thing
I thought he had done the same thing.
It didn't go off, as I had thought
Only misery and ruin, I have brought.
My eyes, ears and also my brain
All went down, deep into the drain.

My life is now full of care
Just no time ``to stand and stare".
What people call my ``Wedding day".
Was, much to my chagrin, the doomsday
Look at her hair - silver white

Can turn into day - the darkest night.
But why have you come to ask me
Aren't there others, like me.

You cite the king, but the devil - scriptures
I reminded him, with some caustic strictures.
He paused for a moment then again came out
Apparently, though looked worn out.
I find myself, dejected and helpless
My life itself, has become life-less.
Of pain only, perhaps, life is an abode
Happiness in it - an occasional episode.
If I throw her out, she goes abegging
And yet, on someone else she is egging.
Earlier, she kept her hair parted
But now suddenly, they seem departed.

What would you do of such a wife
Who makes a complete hell of life.
Some -times I wonder - was it a wed-lock?
No, tells the conscience - it was a pad-lock.
P.G.'s Batchelors Annonymous, I could not find
They would have certainly, changed my mind.
Our morning tea, I have to prepare.
Her loud snores, I have to bear

Before marriage, I was a dude
But now, you see, totally, subdued.
But done is done and can't be undone.
Bear, I will have to, this life-long burden
But why have you come to ask me
Aren't there others, like me.

I moved on to yet another couple
To know some facts about their tussle.
Here, I was stunned and mind deranged
To learn, her parents, her horoscope changed.
She was younger to him, with gay, they proclaimed
And thus, the marriage, they got arranged.
How deceitfully, they manipulated
How cunningly, they calculated.
Like a fish, virtually, he was in their net
And knew not how to get out of the dragnet.
They are cheats : They are cheats :
Exclaimed the boy, with all his heat.
But, the game was overleft nothing more
To hell with the boy, if he felt sore.
You name a disease and she has it
A fortune, though, squandered on it.
Spondylitis, Asthama, Body-pain

Frequent attacks of migraine,
Coryza, Vertigo, ache in tooth
Mercilessly slays Destiny, her youth
With B.P. high and spirits low
Could any life, ever glow
In pain he pressed, her legs and head.
And wondered why he was not dead

Going out for work , she considered bad
Relished her food more, on her bed.
To the doc, he taks her every day
To him, even Sunday is no holiday.
As if, at her birth, she lost her feet
Through neglect, were grafted male feet.
Soldiers' boots fit ber well
Many have seen, many can tell.
But, why have you come to ask my
Aren't there others, like me.

No semblance of redness on her lips
A mountain of flesh on her hips.
Her voice is innocent of sweetness
Her work, ignorant of neatness.
Her talk resembles the dog's bark
Never wakes up with the lark.

A picture, she is, of despondency
Sad, dismayed, morose, melancholy.
But why have you come to ask me
Are't there others, like me.

Tell every eligible batchelor you meet
Fruits of such marriage, are rarely sweet.
To be hen-pecked is worse, to committing suicide
To you, this, in confidence, do I confide.

Yes I realise, there are many such cases
Though, differently, show their faces.
Some happy, some not so, and so on
And thus, I think the world goes on.

WHEN SHE PASSED AWAY

The fateful night was woefully dark
Not even the sound came of a dog's bark
Dreaded silence had pervaded the atmosphere.

Grief held its sway
When she passed away.

His hearth was without fire
His need of her was dire
Like a dog he roamed in search of food

Found he, no other way
When she passed away.

Her illness had cast a gloom
But, death turned it to doom
To save her, made he, efforts futile

His peace flew away
When she passed away.

Her noble deeds were fresh in his memory
He could still give a running commentary

``It was only a dream" he thus consoled

The dream, he cast away
When she passed away.

He was now a dotard
His clothes all tattered
Visibly moved, and yet helpless

To despair, he gave way
When she passed away.

Death had come to fetch her
Death had come to snatch her
Deaths fury knew no bounds

Death turned her into clay
When she passed away.

His money frittered away
Of hope, he had no ray
Frustration came to stay

World kept him at bay
When she passed away.

Her pyre was still burning
Tears, every one shedding
Visible every where, mourning, mourning, as if,

The world passed away
When she passed away.

TUSSLE

(A Sonnet)

Parched lips cried - prayed for rain
Eyes towards sky, expectant, anxious
Clouds too, were cumulus nimbus
Even then, it did not rain.

The patient was seen dying of pain
The doctor made a lot of fuss
And declared the case hopeless
Consciousness, he, did not regain.

Tussles between means and ends
Tussles between life and death
Forever go on, though meaningless, sad,
For, Destiny has kept, in Her hands
All, Concerning us, even our breath
In our own affairs, no say, we ever had.

HAPPINESS

Before Happiness, in thought, I once lay prostrate
Begging her to give me, just her taste
No other way saw my entreaties to demonstrate
But, she flew away atonce, as if, in haste.

Her behavior deeply agitated my mind
So I roamed through the world, her, to find.

From close quarters, I observed lives
Many a husband's, of many wives.
Hospitals, with patients, were awefully full
Doctors could't give them attention full
In courts, I saw thousands of faces
Greatly perturbed, fighting their cases.
If some were being sent to prisons
Some others, breaking walls of prisons.

If some lived in hired houses
Slept on foot-paths, others without houses
To the havenots, some were giving alms
But, haves were spreading their palms
If some were asserting their superiority
Other, with masks, hiding, their inferiority.

Some were dwelling on life's utility
Others were grumbling on its futility.

"Black deeds" had become 'the order of the day'
Not only confined to night - committed also during day
All round were seen, ills, evils and forgeries
Stealing, pick-pocketting, robberies, burglaries.
One had just left for heaven
Another stole even his coffin.
Some advanced a step but to relent
Some did something, only to relent.
In bereavment, some cried hoarse
Why? it was customary of course.

A poor lady, sad, for ten children
A rich, equally sad, for no children.
Some gave up truth, told only lies
Over-populated country, like un-wanted flies.
Some tried to build up a democratic set-up
Busy others to thwart it, with sleeves up.

An orphan, a mournful number playing
Ladies, only vulgar fashions displaying
A terrorist, an innocent child slaying
A doctor, his patient's death delaying.

I saw an Atlanta's fast running
But, cunningly, some one else winning.

Through riots some were up-rooted
By decoits, badly, were others looted
By soldiers some were madly booted
By irate crowds, some loudly hooted.

Towards extravagance some appeared to tilt
Some others were misers, to the hilt
Despite all this, were they happy at all
No shouted loudly - one and all.

Happiness where is it to be found?
Try and see, do hunt like a hound
Guru Nanak was a profound Saint
What a correct picture, did he paint
He proclaimed the entire world unhappy
How could then, anybody be happy?
You have heard of Phoenix and dodo
Happiness is only their copy - ditto
They say, a long back, she did exist
But, equally long back, made exit.

Almost every facet of life did I see
Happiness alone, I couldn't see.

On Cigarette

She came, she saw and she conquerred
Is also her story, as I conjectured.
With a white garb, for her body to hide
Purity and Chastity seemed personified
Like a fairy, descends she, on earth, thus
Her glittering sight immediately enchants us
Resist we cannot, falling for her.
She is sent for us and we for her.

From house-tops warn wise, bold,
"All that glitters is not gold"
"She is as black within as white without
Contains that poison which kills you out"
"Is dangerous to touch and injurious to health
Burns not only you, but also your wealth"

"Non-sense", "utter non-sense" some others say.
"The dogs bark but the caravan passes away
We have our path, we have our way"
And thus brush aside, the sermons away.

Decades five back, a glimpse of her
Led blindly my path, to fall for her.

From her resting place, I took out her
In sheer ecstasy, I unwailed her
In all majesty, I kissed her.
"Thy name is fragrance" exclaimed, I with gay,
A thousand roses, sure, would shyaway.

Since then we have lived together
Like other millions, fortunate to kiss her.
We vowed, we shall never part
And yet, alas I see her depart
I had enough money to maintain her
And enough means to contain her
We couldn't live together, was not to be
For, Destiny said something else to me

Government's budget was soon out
Frightfully, I ran to find out
The touts, alas had raised her rates
To suit their interest, to prohibit her taste
Will no one tell me what right had they
To interfere so blatantly in our way
Had they anything to do with her birth?
Or for that matter with her hearth?
None seems to be the possibility
And yet we face this atrocity

A lion's share, they still devouring
As commission, from her honest earning
Though at our cost they are thriving
In their wanton thoughts, they are serving

Stunned millions cry in despair
To stop all this wretched fan-fair
The touts, alas! would not care.
"Whatever they say, let them say"
"Keep them at bay, beat them away"

PRESSIMISM

Pain, underwent pains, to give birth to pessimism
Then only, the world could see her in realism.

Hardy has been by ideal, for long, now
Even in my dreams, before him, I bow
That, I shall never betray him, I could vow
Without bothering to know, `why' and `how'.

He belived in Pessimism, worshiped `Her' like a priest
Non- believer in Her, was to him-an atheist.

Hardy alone showed me a glimpse
of the moon in me, under total eclipse.

``Far from" ``Woodlandars" and ``The Mayor"
Speek volumes about Hardy's flair
How, before the world, he lays bare
Anxiety, pain, suffering and care.

When hope deserts life in totality
Pessimism alone shows fidelity
But, look, still, at man's temerity
Stretching his arms to reach gaiety.

On the troubled mind, she acts like a balm
Keeps an in tending sinner, quiet and calm
Like cool breeze, in summer, provides charms
and also, in biting cold-keeps one warm.

An optimist has always been a fool
Not to realise,being Destiny's tool
Ever day-dreaming, losing his cool
Seeking comfort, on a three-legged stool.

How much pessimism is sublime
You can only judge with passage of time.
In human life, pessimism has a place
Which no power on earth, can displace.
So long as this mortal world would last
Pessimism would remain stead-fast.

In Today's world, she has acquired greater significance
I had a very close look, with a magnifying lense.

To any problem, a pessimistic approach
Is, to the wise mind the best approach
Pessimism doesn't brook fortitude
It flourishes most, in solitude.

When "She" ordained, "with me abide",
Many a pessimist committed suicide
Not due to frustration, that they died
Only, manifestation of devotation, they could't hide.

Meredith, in literature, an equally big name
Earned honour, reputation, as also fame
For reasons unknown, advocated optimism
Though Hardy stuck to his pessimism.

Meredith and Hardy were friends I gather
"Friend that sticketh close than a brother"
Still we see how their ideas differ
Whither goes Meredith, Hardy whither?

Many a lip had I seen before - in a kissing pose
Forever now parted and rusting - in a wild repose
Many divorced her and many sought it from her
No longer perhaps, could they maintain her.
To the hue and cry, some sticks orns seems cold
They will like her to remain in their fold.
For them love is still subline and supreme
For her, no sacrifice is toogreat, they deem
Khyyam did in their ears whisper"
"Why fret about if today be sweeter".

I am sad without her no doubt
It's death to hide, the secret is cut.
But sobbing, weeping or a wail
Would not be, I know, of any avail
What boots it now for me to repent
When only prints remain and gone serpents.
She is still with me, I know, though apart
Aloof in world's eye, but joined in hearts.
With me alone shall she live
As long as I myself live

Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, she,
Such lovers old are I and she
So it always was and shall over be

END OF AN ERA

- Prakash Mohan Zutshi

It was when I was in my early teens and the period was of mid-thirties that I had my life's proudest privilege and the finest piece of luck to meet Shri Swamiji Maharaj for the first time and to make him subsequently my most revered Guru Dev. To me at least, he was a God-Incarnate, my Mentor, philosopher-Guide, Friend, nay, my everything.

I have no hestitatiori in confessing that he picked me up from the dust, taught me, made a man out of me, raised me in his own esteem and in the esteem of the entire society around me. Many a time he salvaged me un-scathed out of the devastating fires (fig) that engulfed me, having been caused by the hostile stars and planets and many a time he converted impossibilities into possibilities for my sake. His ever merciful blessings and benevolence took pride in me just as an urdu poet expressed in the following couplet :-

"Likha Ye Daavar-e-Mehsher Ne
Meri Fard-e-isyan Par
Ye Woh Banda Hai Jis Par
Naaz Karta Hai Karam Mera"

(On the list of my deeds of guilt the Lord thus wrote "Here is the man on whom my Mercy and Pardon take pride").

But, how actually I came to meet him would perhaps need a iittle narration, My father, Late Pt. Brij Mohan Lal Zutshi, was at that time the Head Master of a High School in Dholpur. It was a princely state in Rajputana but after independence when Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel wrought about his famous balkanisation of such States it came to stay as a part of the present day Rajasthan. It was a tiny state with only one High School and my father's service of nearly thirty years there at a stretch resulted in almost half its population having been taught by him. There was hardly any house in which people, practicing various vocations and taught by him were not living. One of them was one Sardar Narain Singh who was then the Superintendent of the State's Jail. He used to go for his morning walks like my father and often met him on the road. One day he told my father that a saint had come and was staying with him.

He expressed a keen desire that my father must meet him but the latter brushed aside the suggestion with a caustic remark that he had seen enough of the present-day Sadhus. They talked quite sweetly, indulged in loud discourses and sermons and when they felt that their listeners had been sufficiently impressed, they would ask for a blanket and a railway-ticket for Hardwar and would then never be heard any more. In his opinion, most of these so-called Sadhus were mere imposters. He himself was a true vedanti, had never visited temples, did not believe in idol worship but always practiced

"SOHAM" (I am God) day and night with his breath the breath itself saying "SO" while going in and "HAM" while coming out. Simultaneously, however. He had a yearning to meet true saints from whom he could perhaps learn something more about "Spiritualism". He was a strong man, very firm in his convictions and far away from the worldly vices. Today, I can visualise that he was quite high on the spiritual plane and if I may say so, was a complete saint in ``girhasti" to the last syllable. He also advocated his philosophy in the following urdu couplet of his own composition :-

"Tu Zikr-e-Anal Huq Nafas Se Kar Har Dam, Dui ke Guman ko mitaye chala Ja".

(Remember day and night through your breath that you are your-self God and go on banishing the idea that God and you are two separate entities).

So, next day, when Sardar Narain Singh again met him and broached the same subject, remarking that he had talked to the Saint and that he had assured him that he would never demand a blanket or a railway-ticket, my father, though still reluctant, agreed to meet him. Accordingly, the same day, on his return from the school he had his usual meals and siesta and thereafter, in the early hours of the evening started for Sardar Narain Singh's house which was at a distance of hardly one Kilometer. While leaving, he told my mother that he would be back within a coupled of minutes. It was there that he first met this

Saint who was none else but Shri Swamiji Maharaj himself. Today, when I read or hear something about "Love at first sight" my thoughts go back to this "first meeting", which I have every reason to believe, must have been a case of "Regards at first sight". My father, who had evidently gone to see him for just a couple of minutes actually returned after about two hours and only after causing some moments of concern to my mother. When she asked him for the reasons for the inordiriate delay, he replied that he had in fact come back much earlier for he wanted to stay with the Saint for a few hours more. Imagine his magic, magnetism, his charm that kept my father bound for hours at a stretch, in his very first encounter. Here I must say that it went entirely to the genius of Shri Swamiji Maharaj that he did not fail to realise the immediate need of impressing my father in that first meeting itself, otherwise, he knew, my father would run away, thoroughly dejected and never to return again. Only God knows what actually transpired between the two for two long hours. I only know that when my father returned home, my mother remarked that she had not seen him happier in the past for many years. My father told her that he had at long last found a true Saint that day and would make it a point to see him every day till he stayed at Dholpur He looked greatly exalted and considerably excited and in that condition started gleefully reciting Saint Kabir's couplet which ran like this

"Aankh Na Moondu, Kaan Na Moondu,
Dhyan Kapaat Na Laya

Khuley Nain Se Sahib Dekhoon,
Ye Guru Bhed Bataya"

(The secret of how one could see the Lord without closing one's eyes and ears, was revealed by the Guru).

This was his first miracle.

I was too little a boy then conclude anything but I heard my mother remarking that Shri Swamiji Maharaj had perhaps shown him the "Light" with his naked eyes which he had been longing to see for long. Soon thereafter I was initiated into his "Order". I also started going to him but we talked over lighter subjects only like what dishes had I eaten in the morning or what did I propose to eat that evening, what games did I play and to top all that - a few jokes. Our meetings lasted for just a couple of days only when one fine morning we heard that Shri Swamiji Maharaj had left Dholpur for Datia. We naturally became sad, as partings generally are, but this separation was only as Byron put it.

"Though together yet apart". Our hearts were still with him.

After an interlude of about three years during which my father died and I passed my High School Examination. Destiny waved Her magic wand and beaconed my mother to come to Datia. My mother readily responded to the call and reached Datia. Fortunately, we had our links with Datia too since my eldest brother Pt. Hari Mohan Zutshi was at that time teaching in the State's High School and so my mother had no particular difficulty in migrating there. I also accompanied her. While in Datia, for once it did not occur to me that I was actully residing in the neighbour- hood of my own God-incarnate but only later on when this realisation dawned on me I was remined of Ghalib's following couplet :-

"Masjid Ke Zair Saye Ek Ghar Banalia Hai
Ye Banda-e-Kamina, Ham Saya-e-Khuda Hai"

(I have constructed a house right under the shadow of a mosque and so this rascal of a man has become the neighbourer of God).

From Agra where I had gone to prosecute my studies further, I used to come to Datia during the summer vacations and Dussehra Holidays to stay with my mother and brother. Since it was a very small and primitive type of State, there were not many avenues for one's recreation. It was a problem to pass time. So more with the intension of passing time in a noble company than with any other, I used to go to Shri Peetambra Peeth every evening during my stays in Datia.

Dussehra, a great Hindu festival (which for centuries, has been signifying the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana or as people say, victory of good over evil) used to be celebrated in the princly states particularly. With great pomp and show. Datia was no exception, Here people in their colourful dresses used to throng the ``Surrion-Ka-Maidan" which is quite adjacent to Shri Peetambra Peeth itself and perhaps now houses the Bus stand (if I am not mistaken) from the early hours of the evening of that day. Thereafter, the State's Maharaja Came, riding an elephant. According to the tradition he hurled a spear at a he-buffalo (who was placed in front of the elephant) and wounded it. This animal, I was told, was reared and well fed for the whole year, exclusively for this occasion. This animal which was till then tied by strong ropes was then let losse. Being badly wounded it ran helter-skelter and sometimes even charged like a tiger at the spectators who came its way. It was chased by some persons on horse-backs with drawn swords and he who first struck the animal with his sword and downed him, was awarded a prize by the Maharaja and this, perhaps marked the culmination of the celebrations. Once I also witnessed these celebrations and from there went straight to Shri Peetambra Peeth. Normally, I should have been in a gay mood having witnessed a great festival just a few minutes before, but, I donot yet know the logic of how and why I was feeling so greatly distressed, morose and melancholy. It was ``Aarti" time and I stood reverently at the frontal window of the temple. Maharaj ji stood by my side. I was absolutely un-mindful of the "Aarti" going on but was lost in thinking that while my father was already dead, the cruel hands of Fate had now also snatched my mother as well. (she had died during the summer vacations immediately preceding the Dussehra I am talking about). I was brooding that I had become a burden on my brothers which I hated in the extreme and so thought that the wisest course left for me was to commit suicide. The ``Aarti" was over and `prasad' was distributed. Maharajji also took his share but soon slipped it in my hands. Immediately thereafter, he said "Prakashji, do you know I can read one's hands also Come along. I will read out to you your hand". Holding my right hand in his, he started speaking thus "Prakashji, your hand shows that you indulge in perverse thinking. Death does not bring salvation automatically and more particularly the "Akaal Mritues" (untimely deaths). This world is a battle-field and you must carry on your struggle heroically, whatever be the consequences. At present you are unfortunately under the shadow of Saturn which lasts for nineteen years. This is indeed a very bad period for you. But when once this period is over you would be leading a very happy life. You would have enoug money to discharge all your worldly obligations with dignity and ease and that is all for the day. I will tell you other things some other time." He made it crystal clear that he knew every bit of what I had been thinking about, during this ``Aarti" period. But, how did he know all that, I think only saints can explain. It is beyond our comprehension atleast. The impact of his words was so great that for a long time I could not look at my life that silly way. Here I may admit that temperamentally I am a born pessimist and tend to believe in the refrain of Thomas Hardy's various writings that "happiness is but an occassional episode in the general drama of pain". So, now that he is no more, I have again fallen into a deep slumber of pessimism and do not think I will ever awake from it till death it self comes to wake me up.

One evening when I went to Maharaj ji he was all alone. I set there and started talking with him. Suddenly he said "Prakashji, today I want to tell you something in confidence. Scores of people have come to me by now but none has come up to my expectations so far. You are the only person whom I consider worthy of making my successor, ``But," in the very next breath he added ``I can not dare to open my mouth because if Master Sahib (meaning my eldest brother Pt. Hari Mohan Zutshi who was then teaching in Datia) comes to know of this he would think that I have snatched his brother from him. He would immediately stop your coming over here and would literally eat me up in anger." Hearing this, I only cursed my luck but said nothing. After all at the time, I was indeed a dependent younger brother to a supporting elder brother. The following Persian Saying however spoke on my behalf.

"Sug baash, Birader-e- khurd na baash"

(It is much better to be a dog than a younger brother)

In those days there were very few visitors to Shri Peetambra Peeth. My daily evening visits gave me an impression that Maharaj ji was then meditating rather vigorouly - for long hours at a stretch. He was so to say, in a shell and was therefore not so widely known. However, after a few years when once he came out of this shell he never looked back. Immediately his name and fame spread far beyond the frontiers of Madhya Pradesh to other parts of the country and very soon I found that thousands of men and women had become his desciples. The precincts of Shri Peetambra Peeth themselves started expessing regrets that they had no more space to accommodate all his desciples at a time.

Even renowned saints came to pay respects to him and acknowledged his greatness. Many others, including foreigners came to seek guidance from him.

One evening, after a few days of this happening, I was again sitting with Maharajji as usual and he asked me whether I practiced anything by way of "Puja." "Gayatri Mantra" I replied. He then enquired whether I would do if he gave me some other "Mantra" I was only a boy till then and knew nothing about Spiritualism". I therefore innocently asked him whether there was any other "Mantra" greater and more powerful than "Gayatri" which I was already practing. He then told me that he wanted to give me some "Mantra" of Goddess Saraswati (Goddess of Learning) and assured me that if I rendered it with complete devotion and dedication, I would always secure First Divisions in my various examinations and would also become a great Orator. One could become wealthy also by pleasing "Saraswati" as Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth) got automatically peased. I was thrilled at the prospect of getting first divisions and becoming wealthy also in the process. What more a student could aspire for? I therefore readly took that "Mantra" from him. Maharajji was kind enough to give me a rosary also for this purpose. So great was my excitement that I started counting the beads almost day and night. It was the time of the Summer Vacations and I had all the time in the world to concentrate on this new venture. However, I could do it for hardly three days only when something very extra-ordinary, most exciting and thrilling and which completely changed the entire course of my life, happened. On the fourth day early in the morning at about 4-30 A.M. while I was still sleeping, I saw the most exceptional dream of my life. In that dream, I saw "Maa Kali" appearing before me with a sword in one hand and a bowl of blood in the other. When I beheld Her face to face I started reciting my newly acuired "Saraswati Mantra" quite audibly. When "Maa Kali" heard it. She stared at me and with Her finger right at my mouth pointed out that it was not Her "Mantra" that I was repeating. On my telling Her that I did not know Her Mantra, She started telling it to me and made me repeat it exactly as a teacher asks his child to go on repeating RAT, RAT RAT, RAT till he is able to learn it by heart. 'Maa' disappeared only after making sure that I had learnt that ``Mantra" by heart. It was indeed a peculiar dream the like of which I had never seen or heard before. I immediately woke up but since I had no Sanskrit or even Hindi background I noted it down on a piece of paper in Urdu though it was in Sanskrit. I was able to remember it by heart even when I was awake. I could not sleep again and so, after performing the normal ablutions I made my way ``Shree Peetambra Peeth". Since my morning sojourns to Bankhandeshwar were rare, Maharaj ji was naturally surprised to see me and curiously enquired about the purpose of my visit at that early hours. When I told him the whole story that had brought me there, he went inside and brought an old book which apparently contained nemerous

``Mantras" of various Gods and Goddesses. He then took out that particular page on which was inscribed the portrait of ``Maa Kali", Her various Mantras and the detailed procedures of worshipping Her. He then compared the wordings of the ``Mantra" as given in the book with those scribbled by me on that piece of paper and which I had taken carefully to show him. After comparing the two and finding that they tallied with each other completely, I found him lost for a few moments with his eyes closed. I can swear that never before in my life had I heard or read anything like that ``Mantra" Maharaj ji then opened his eyes, smiled and said thus ``Prakashji, both the negative and the positive currents were made to be joined to produce``Light". I wanted to make you a man of learning, a luminary and a true pandit but that was not to be. You should now concentrate only on this ``Mantra" and you would be benefitted by it only". He then remarked that normally only the Guru imparts such ``Mantras" to his desciples, but in a rare case, say one in thousands ``Maa" Herself does the duty of the Guru. He congratulated me for being so extra ordinarily lucky and perhaps felt proud of his desciple's achievement. I do not know how else could a miracle be defined. Every word of it came out true.

After finishing my studies in the summer of 1943, I went to Delhi in search of a job which I readily got only due to the blessings of Maharaj ji. My third elder brother, a bachelor, was already in service there and I stayed with him. One day I heard that an All India Sadhu Sammelan was being held on the banks of river Jamuna and scores of Sadhus from all parts of the country, including all the four Shankaracharyas, Swami Karpatri Ji and others who mattered even slightly in the spiritual field, were taking part. I was immediately reminded of Maharaj Ji, who, I thought, might also attend. I therefore told my brother that I would go to the site to try and locate him. My brother felt that it was futile since there would be hundreds of Sadhus (wearing similar robes) accompanied by thousands of their cronies and then a motley croud of yet another few thousands, consisting of gay-spectators, urchins, fun-makers and others. It looked really impossible to locate him in such a large congregation.Nevertheless, I decided to try. Most strangely and surprisingly, the apparently impossible looking task became so easy that I can not simply imagine. Within a few minutes of my reaching there, I saw to my amazement that Guru Dev was standing just in front of me. I fell on his feet and brought him to our modest house where he gladly stayed, dined and even slept on a ``Charpoy" since we had no ``Takhat" or any other hard bed. How elated I felt in the company of the noblest of the noble, I can not describe. I was reminded of Bhagat Vidur whose house was similarly graced by Lord Krishna. My mother had told me the story when I was Child.

"Duryodhan Bahu Pak Banayo
Preet Bina Mo Kon Nahin Bhayo
Vidur Bhagat Ki Preet Jo Jani
Basi Saag Bahut Ruch Khani."

(Lord Krishna syas that He was invited by Duryodhan who served Him many dainty dishes but since there was no element of love and affection, He could not relish any of them. However, when He went to Bhagat Vidur, He thoroughly relished the only dish served - a stale vegetable - - because it was full of Vidur's love and affection for Him).

Some people may prefer to call it a `coincidence' but to me It was a miracle an instance of how quickly he responded to his devoties feeling. This was the second time when he graced our house, the first being his visit to our house in Dholpur at my father's invitation.

On the 4th December 1948 I married and became concious of the responsibilities of the new life I was ushering in, and so instead of going anywhere else for a ``honeymoon", came to Datia to fall at my Master's feet and to seek his blessings. At my request he again agreed to grace our house (for the third time) to dine with us and to bless my wife whom subsequently he many times fondly addressed as "Daughter-in-Law." He never made it a secret that he enjoyed Kashmiri dishes.

I married my eldest daughter, Indu, to Deepak (Ofcourse, after taking Maharaj ji's blessing and only after he had himself tallied the two horoscopes personally and gave a green signal) but it so happened that Deepak fell ill suddenly on the wedding day itself. We gave him the best possible treatment we could afford but to no avail. Almost a month thus passed but his ailment showed signs of aggravation only. Agony, worry and anxiety pervaded the whole atmosphere of the house and we did not know what to do. All of a sudden, one day, (I vividly remeber, it was a Thursday), I was reminded of Guru Dev. I told my wife, Girija that I had decided to go to Datia on the coming Saturday to seek Maharaj Ji's blessings as that appeared to me to be the only solution. No other alternative appeared to have been left with me. Where medical treatments failed, only prayers succeeded. Lord Tenhyson also once wrote``More things are wrought by prayers than this world dreams of" This also inspired me to pray at Datia. It was here that something most extra - ordinary happened, which many a Common man would even refuse to believe. On that memorable Thursday night itself, while I was sleeping, I saw, in my dream, Maharaj ji, standing before me and he spoke thus ``Prakash Ji, why are you worried. Have you no faith left in 'Mai' (Mother). Arey Bhai, ailments do come but they go also, why feel so dejected and disheartned? Every thing would be alright very soon." He then disappeared. The dream was over. I immediately woke up, woke up Girija too and told her all about the dream. I told her that since Maharaj Ji had consoled and blessed me hereonly I had decided not to go to Datia. Unfortunately she was a nagging wife (although otherwise an ideal lady) and so she retorted that dreams were after all dreams only and were therefore far away from realities. Under no circumstances was she prepared to allow me to cancel my proposed visit. Accordingly, I started from Delhi on Saturday night and reached "Shri Peetambra Peeth" in the early hours of Sunday morning. Maharaj Ji was sitting in a corner of the Verandah (where his sandals are now kept) and was meditating, The moment I bowed before him, as usual, in reverence and greeted him with "Namo Narayan"he stared at me and said rather contemptuously "Prakash Ji, did you not feel consoled and satisfied while staying back at Delhi itself? Did you still need to come here all the way? Arey Bhai, ailments do come but they go. What else do you want me to tell you. Everything would become alright." He made it clear to me as day-light that he fully knew he had appeared before me in Delhi. Repetition of exactly thesame words in person which were uttered earlier in a dream, was a phonomenon I had never seen before in my life and which is totally un-heard of. An experience worth remembering for the whole of one's life. I felt stunned and ashamed. I had no answer. I only said in a rather low tone (which generaly signfies confessions of guits) that it was due to my weakness and that I was really sorry. I did not tell him that it was Girija who coaxed and forced me to make that visit. Thereafter he commanded "Jaaiye Saab". The impact of these words, the pace, the tone, the way they were uttered and the enormous meanings they conveyed, can not be expressed on paper. Very ofter he used to say "Jaaiye Saab" in the same way after my meeting with him ended and I took leave of him. One had only to hear them to understand. Soon thereafter Deepak became alright. Agony was abated.

In the year 1979, when Girija, being seriously ill, was lying in a city Nurshing Home. I found that Maharaj Ji was also confined to the Nurshing Home of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, with Kidney trouble. What an irony of Fate? What a coincidence? A case of double worry and double enxiety, starting right into my face. The extent of my agony at that time could better be imagined than described, while I had to be the side of my dying Girija, I was all the time conscious of my duty to be at Maharaj Ji's attendance as well. And, my inability to be at both the Nurshing Homes simultaneously which were at considerable distances, made me all the more perplexed and non-plussed. However, Girija breathed her last on the 29th March and thus left me free to divert my attention exclusively towards Maharaj Ji. Except to come and pay one's respects there was hardly anything which one could do to ameliorate his suffering and to this extent only I also played my part. Every day there was a regular stream of visitors but since the doctors had advised him not to talk too much these visitors were allowed to have only his ``Darshans" for hardly a minute or so and were then ousted from his room by his body-guards (I means his dosciple on duty). One evening, during these days when I went to see him as usual, I got a pleasant surprise. No sooner had I bowed before him than he asked ``Prakash Ji, have you got a house of your own in Delhi? I replied in the negative. He than asked ``where would you live when you retire from service and have to leave the Govt. accommodation"? I said ``In a rentedhouse, Sir" ``but", he said ``rents must be very high in Delhi" and I said ``of course Yes,, but, Sir, what is the alternative"? He became quite for a moment and the meeting abruptly ended at this point. Incidentaly, this was my last meeting with him. Thereafter he left for Datia. However the moment I came back home, I told my children that Maharaj Ji had today given me a house too. It was clear to me like a writing on the wall. Rarely he said any such things directly. He had his own knack of giving out hints which he expected his descipls to understand and interpret. Long communion had however enabled me to understand the hidden meanings of his utterances, more often than not. Soon thereafter, circumstances so shaped themselves that this house about which I had never dreamt (frankly speaking, I could never afford the luxury of owning a house) is now actually under construction and I hope to be its proud owner one day (proud in the sense that it has, in reality, been gifted to me by my Master). Who would not agree that even when he was critically ill, he had the interests of his desciples at his heart and never his benevolence declined?

3rd June 1979, was Perhaps the gloomiest dayin my life. Since morning when I woke up I was off my mood. I was losing temper just over trifles. There was some sort of a mental conflict in my mind. My heart was, as if aching, as if I was not my own self. I had become a picture of despondency obviously without any rhyme or reason. I can not myself describe my condition exactly. The following Urdu couplet by "Saif" may perhaps do so.

"Saif Ye din to Qayamat Se Bhi Badtar Guzra
Janey Kya Baat thi, her baat pe rona Aaya."

(Ah Saif, this day has come about to be worse than even the Dooms day. God knows what was wrong but every trifle made me weep).

The day thus passed and came the evening. I switched on my T.V. for a diversion but soon thereafter I was struck by a bombshell in the form of a telephonic call from Datia, shockingly intimating to me that our dearest Maharaj Ji and left his earthly remains. I was rudely shocked and hung down the receiver. A long, a great and a magnificent innings had come to an end. An era had ended. I cried in wilderness, I wept and waild, what else could I do? A calamity had befallen me. Alas: I had been orphaned once again.

"I know not why, I could not die"

As Byron put it. Two tragedies had struck me within a span of just three months.

Indeed, "the moving finger or Destiny had written and no ocean of my tears could wash a word of it." Later on, while in a pensive mood, I composed the following couplet.

"Ravaana ho gaye khud to woh safar ke liye
Taraptey rah gaye hum Haye Hum-safar ke liye."

(While he himself left for his journey, I was left to suffer the pangs of separation and pining for a co-traveller).

Inspite of every-thing which Maharaj Ji did for me and my family, I have a lament that while he himself crossed the ocean like a superb Master -Swimmer, which he indeed was, he deserted me and left me drifting like a log while I was still miles away from the shore. But, this is outwardly only. Inwardly, he is still with me. I still continue to enjoy his blessings, He often comes to me in my dreams to guide me, whenever he considers it necessary. Would any-body believe that even while I was writing this article, he came to me and reminded me of his visit to our house in Delhi which I had totally forgotten to include earlier?

One simply cannot imagine the extent of his attachment to me not can I describe it myself. Every word of his was a miracle in itself. Immediately comes to my mind the following excellent couplet composed over a century back by my grand father Late Pt. Kanhaiya Lal Zutshi -

"Aik Qum Kya Terey har lafz mein hai ye taaseer
Teri her baat mein Aijaz-e-Mashiha dekha."

(You have surpassed even Messiah who was renowned for his miracles, by giving every word you utter, the effect of a miracle, while he had to take shelter behind a "Qum").

P.M. ZUTSHI